



ANYTHING THAT MOVES

Beyond The Myths of Bisexuality

An Interview
with Starhawk

**Spirituality
& Healing**

Issue #7
Spring 1994 \$6

07



Anything That Moves:

Beyond the Myths of Bisexuality

move (moov): 1. to advance, progress, or make progress. 2. to change place or position. 3. to take action. 4. to prompt, actuate or impel into action. 5. action toward an end; a step. 6. to set in motion; **STIR OR SHAKE.**

about our name...

Our choice to use this title for the magazine has been nothing less than controversial. That we would choose to redefine the stereotype that "bisexuals will fuck anything that moves," to suit our own purposes has created myriad reactions. Those critical of the title feel we are purporting the stereotype and damaging our image. Those in favor of its use see it as a movement away from the stereotype, toward bisexual empowerment.

We deliberately chose the radical approach. We are creating dialogue through controversy. We are challenging people to face their own external and internal biphobia. We are demanding attention, and are re-defining "anything that moves" *on our own terms*.

READ OUR LIPS; WE WILL WRITE OR PRINT OR SAY ANYTHING THAT MOVES US BEYOND THE LIMITING STEREOTYPES THAT ARE DISPLACED ON TO US.

This magazine was created by bisexuals and their friends. All proceeds are invested into its production and the bisexual community. It is published by the Bay Area Bisexual Network and reflects the integrity and inclusive nature of the BARN Statement of Purpose. **ATM** was created out of pride; out of necessity; out of anger. We are tired of being analyzed, defined and represented by people other than ourselves—or worse yet, not considered at all. We are frustrated by the imposed isolation and invisibility that comes from being told or expected to choose either a homosexual or heterosexual identity. Monosexuality is a heterosexist dictate used to oppress homosexuals and to negate the validity of bisexuality.

Bisexuality is a whole, fluid identity. Do not assume that bisexuality is binary or duog-

mous in nature: that we have "two" sides or that we MUST be involved simultaneously with both genders to be fulfilled human beings. In fact, don't assume that there are only two genders. Do not mistake our fluidity for confusion, irresponsibility, or an inability to commit. Do not equate promiscuity, infidelity, or unsafe sexual behavior with bisexuality. Those are human traits that cross ALL sexual orientations. Nothing should be assumed about anyone's sexuality—including your own.

We are angered by those who refuse to accept our existence; our issues; our contributions; our alliances; our voice. It is time for the bisexual voice to be heard. Do not expect each magazine to be representative of all bisexuals, for our diversity is too vast. Do not expect a clear-cut definition of bisexuality to jump out from the pages. We bisexuals tend to define bisexuality in ways that are unique to our own individuality. There are as many definitions of bisexuality as there are bisexuals. Many of us choose not to label ourselves anything at all, and find the word 'bisexual' to be inadequate and too limiting. Do not assume that the opinions expressed are shared by all bisexuals, by those actively involved in the Bisexual Movement, by the **ATM** staff, or the BARN Board of Directors.

What you can expect is a magazine that, through its inclusive and diverse nature, creates movement away from external and internal limitations.

This magazine is about **ANYTHING THAT MOVES:** that moves us to think; that moves us to fuck (or not); that moves us to feel; that moves us to believe in ourselves—**To Do It For Ourselves!**

about BARN...

The Bay Area Bisexual Network is an alliance of bisexual and bi-supportive groups, individuals, and resources in the San Francisco Bay Area. BARN is coalescing the bisexual community and creating a movement for acceptance and support of human diversity by coordinating forums, social events, opportunities, and resources. We support relationships among people regardless of gender, which can include relating intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, sensually, and sexually. We support celibacy, monogamy, and non-monogamy as equally valid lifestyle choices. We support open expression of affection and touch among people without such expression necessarily having sexual implications. The BARN is by nature educational in that we are supporting the rights of all women and men to develop as whole beings without oppression because of age, race, religion, color, class or different abilities, nor because of sexual preference, gender, gender preference and/or responsible consensual sexual behavior preferences. We also support acceptance in areas of employment, housing, healthcare, and education. This includes access to complete sexual information, free expression of responsible consensual sexual activity, and other individual freedoms. Membership is open to all bi-positive people whether or not they consider themselves bisexual.

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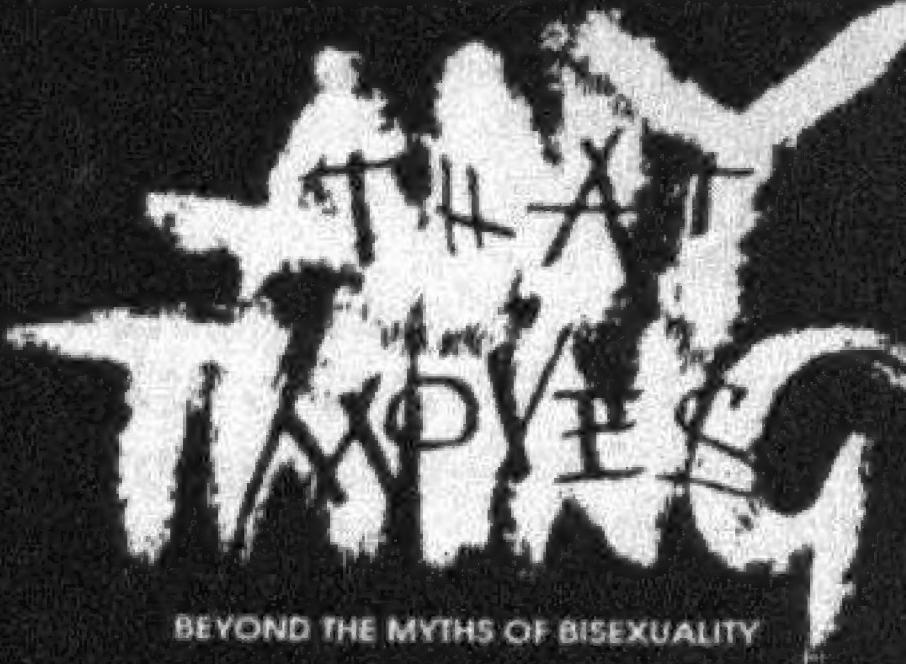
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V is For Victory I is for Inclusion P is for People

by Adrienne Davis

It took a little while to get it done, but finally **ATM** will be dropping the *Our Words, Our Voices* section, which has functioned as a writer of color ghetto for a number of issues now. This decision was made after I and a number of other non-white bisexuals wrote, talked, and complained to other members of the staff. Since this section has been a consistent part of your magazine for two years now, and this is your magazine, we felt it appropriate to explain ourselves.

My involvement began back in early 1992 when Kuwaza Imara, an African-American bisexual activist, called to inform me, as a member of the staff, that Indigo Som, a very talented writer, had not received appropriate credit in the table of contents because her piece had been printed in *Our Words, Our Voices*. I took this issue to the editrix at the time and then to each staff meeting after that, trying to communicate what the problem was. The problem is simple: we, as artists of color, don't want to have our culture and/or ethnicity ignored but, at the same time, it is not always the defining focus of our work. We reserve the right to tell you who we are by the content of our work, not by where we are placed within the magazine.

This magazine will remain committed to being truly multicultural in our content and in the contributors whose work we publish. As a writer of color on the staff, I commit to continuing to speak up and out when well-meaning mistakes like this one crop up. My personal hope, as a woman-child of the African diaspora, is that this magazine will continue to be at the forefront of mapping out the real multicultural wilderness and finding that fabled Fountain of Diversity so that all of us may drink deeply of its rainbow waters.

To all the people who supported me, validated my perceptions and lit a fire under my butt (Kuwaza Imara, Cheryl-Marie, Bubba Roberts, and others), thank you. It's nice to win one, once in a while.



Darlene Weide

photo: Jim Frazin

CREDITS

Front cover photo, Back cover photos: Darlene Weide

Inside back cover: Roberta Gregory has created queer comics since 1974. She is best known for her infamous comic book *Naughty Bits*, featuring the infamous "Bitchy Bitch," published by Fantagraphics.

Related Credits from Issue 6:

Front cover painting: Pearl Saad

Photo of front cover

painting: Mark McPhail

Photos pages 11, 13, 15, 16: Naomi Tucker

Photo page 30: Teemu Leisti

Editorial

The Sacred Necklace

By Tori Woodard

It's ironic that I was asked to be managing editor for the Spirituality and Healing issue of **Anything That Moves**. After a short quest for spiritual meaning, I decided years ago to defer to others on spiritual matters and devote myself to political action instead. Having to write this editorial has given me the chance to look again at what spirituality means to me.

As an agnostic, I find spirit in the connection between all living things. Three things remind me of that spirit most profoundly. One is the seemingly telepathic communication that occurs between human beings who are connected to each other by love, including our uncanny ability to find like souls in the virtual sea of humanity.

The other two areas in which I most feel spirit are nature and sexuality. Stargazing fills me with awe. Seeing free wild animals gives me hope for the future. Spending time out-of-doors re-fuels the spiritual pillar of white light that burns inside me.

Because **Anything That Moves** focuses on bisexuality, this editorial will focus on the third area that I mentioned: the spirituality of sexuality. When I was on my youthful spiritual quest, one of the religions I tried was Buddhism. The reason I didn't stay with it was that I felt more transcendent making love than

I did meditating and trying to eliminate my desire.

I can hardly find the words to tell you how important sensual pleasure is to my spirit. I remember going through hard times and thinking after I had an orgasm, "Now there's a reason to live."

It's so painful to read about girls and women in countries which practice female genital mutilation. Their clitoris is removed, often their labia are removed, and sometimes the vaginal opening is stitched together. I can barely see through my tears to write about it. Leaving aside the physical pain they endure during the mutilation and that many must endure as a result during intercourse, how can they live without sexual pleasure? How grey their lives must be. My clitoris is the crown jewel in my sacred necklace. I can't imagine being happy without it.

While female genital mutilation is a horrifying way in which societies try to control sexuality, let us not forget that there are other ways as well. Male genital mutilation, for example, is a routine practice in the hospitals of this country. (See Teresa Piercy's article on "Spiritual Abuse" in this issue for more on that topic.)

Psychological intimidation is probably the most common method of controlling sexuality. Many religions set up a false dichotomy between spirit and

sexuality. Instead of acknowledging genitals as sacred sources of pleasure and of life itself, they teach us that genitals are "dirty," that sexuality is sinful, and that women who enjoy their sexuality are "whores." Calling women whores is an attempt to control their independence, sensuality, and spirit.

Fortunately, there are alternative religious sects in many countries that try to counter the teachings of institutionalized religions. Sufism, for example, is a celebratory religion that grew out of Islam. Tantrism is a Hindu sect that emphasizes the connection between spirituality and sexuality, and teaches every lover to see "God" or "Goddess" in their beloved. Practicing Tantra is a wonderful way to deepen a relationship. The neo-pagan religions of Europe and North America celebrate the seasons and the sacredness of sexuality. (See the interview with Starhawk in this issue for more on pagan religion.)

Alternative sects such as these try to heal the wounds inflicted by mainstream religions. They try to free the human soul. That's probably why my spiritual quest stopped when I found paganism. Freedom - nature - sexuality - spirit: only a religion that reveres the sacred connection among these four things can inspire me.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Anything That Moves staff wants this magazine to be as inclusive as possible. We encourage and welcome articles and photographs by, about or of interest to bisexuals from people living anywhere in the U.S. and abroad. We're especially interested in material from people of color and others whose voices are under-represented in the media.

All written submissions must be typed, preferably on a computer. Please indicate in a cover letter whether the submission is available on diskette. Currently we have the ability to translate most formats so that we can use them. If the submission is accepted, we will ask you to send the diskette to save volunteer time spent re-typing.

Articles should be 1000 to 2000 words. Manuscripts will not be returned. Photographs and diskettes will be returned if you so request. The cover letter should also give your address, phone number, and a 1 or 2 sentence biography of yourself.

ATM has received piles of short stories and poetry, reflecting the literary and sensitive nature of our readership. We are always interested in more, so keep sending them in! But our real need is for drawings, cartoons, and photographs with which to illustrate the magazine. Please send us drawings on any topic; we'll save them until they fit the theme of an issue or article.

Lastly, we want to hear from you. We want letters. Our writers are all volunteer; their only reward is to know people read their work. Does anything in this issue have special meaning for you? Do you disagree with any of our provocative columnists? Let us know!

Send all submissions and correspondence to *Anything That Moves*, c/o BABN, 2404 California Street #24, San Francisco CA 94115 or you can e-mail us c/o gerard@netcom.com.



Some of the **ATM** staff for Issue #7: (clockwise from top left) Jim Frazin, Tori Woodard, Josh, Naomi Tucker, Adrienne Davis, Katie Mecham, and Gerard Palmer!

photo: Darlene Weide

Keep On Marching!™



JUNE 26 1994

On June 26th, 1994, the International March on the United Nations to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People will take place in New York City. It promises to be one of the largest human rights marches in history.

Come celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.
Make your plans NOW! You can help make Stonewall 25 a success!

I WANT TO BE A PART OF HISTORY

I want to volunteer. Please add my name to your mailing list.

I want to host a dinner party to benefit Stonewall 25.

I want to contribute financially. Enclosed is my check for:

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Contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

The Straight Poop

A Political Opinion Column

By Paul Smith

I DREAMED I SAW ST. AUGUSTINE

While sexuality defines queer culture, in many religious communities it is a basis for shame. Christian tradition, which is so dominant in Western culture, began with early sects who advocated "moral freedom" from the pagan Romans. This in practice turned out to be sexual and physical abstinence, as well as sharing or giving away possessions, and obedience to the higher power.

St. Augustine made this into a sex-negative ideology which abides with us yet. He believed that since we are helpless against the power of our own human sexuality, the only answer is sexual abstinence and blind obedience to the Christian church and state. As Princeton theologian Elaine Pagels observes, many people bought this line because they would rather feel guilty than helpless.

This modern sex-negative attitude, rooted in ancient fear, is why the queer political agenda must include acceptance of the queer sexual act. Even if we choose to be sexually inactive, sexual boundaries abound in everyday life which ultimately reflect what is commonly regarded as "sex."

People at work asked me if gays, lesbians, and bisexuals were aware that the March on Washington was seen as a Pervert Parade by straight America. My only take on that sentiment is that what is for some a Pervert Parade, is for others Simply Fabulous.

This prudish criticism of our sexuality is merely rejec-

tion of our political agenda and ultimately our sexuality. It is also one of the reasons we named this magazine **Anything That Moves**. It exposes a basis of our oppression as bisexuals, not only from straights but also from gays and lesbians. How many times have I been called a "sybarite" by my gay dates? Too many times. The fear of bisexuals being sexually out of control offends all of the intolerant.

In the meantime, our straight enemies from the religious right are busy.

Note the recent rash of right-wing religious groups coming to San Francisco to bait and attack the protesters against the California queer-bashing clergyman Lou Sheldon at the Hamilton Square Baptist Church. Sheldon's friends have gotten the S.F. police to pursue those who protested his recent sermonizing; the cops are viewing the tapes of the protest and searching for the culprits. The Christian Network has been milking this for all it's worth.

Groups like Love in Action and Courage, a Catholic organization, are also active. Love in Action is a "formerly gay" religious community. Courage is a twelve-step program for queers. The Rev. John O'Shey of the Pittsburgh (PA) chapter tells us that Courage is not an

anti-homosexual group; it is just against sex outside of marriage (and guess who can't get married).

I ran into this "queer cure" stuff myself when I got my first AIDS test in the early 1980's. The counselor at the Alameda County Health Department unit told me after the results that I should consider joining a group in Marin County who taught queers how to get rid of their jones for sex. Horrors. I went right over to the AIDS coalition leader I had met at my last East Bay Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club meeting and told him the counselor's name, address, phone number, and color of eyeshadow. So much for her.

Sexuality is a transcending act when it resacrifices Eros. This doesn't mean that you have to have sex to be bisexual. What we must do is sanctify, talk of, imagine the future of, practice, prepare for and/or clean up after bisexuality. Otherwise it will continue to be hard to tell if it is St. Augustine, Jesse Helms

or Nan Parks that we fear the most.

Where's the bridge? How does queer sexuality come into its own right?

Annie Sprinkle comes to mind as one of the most posi-

SEE POOP, PAGE 16

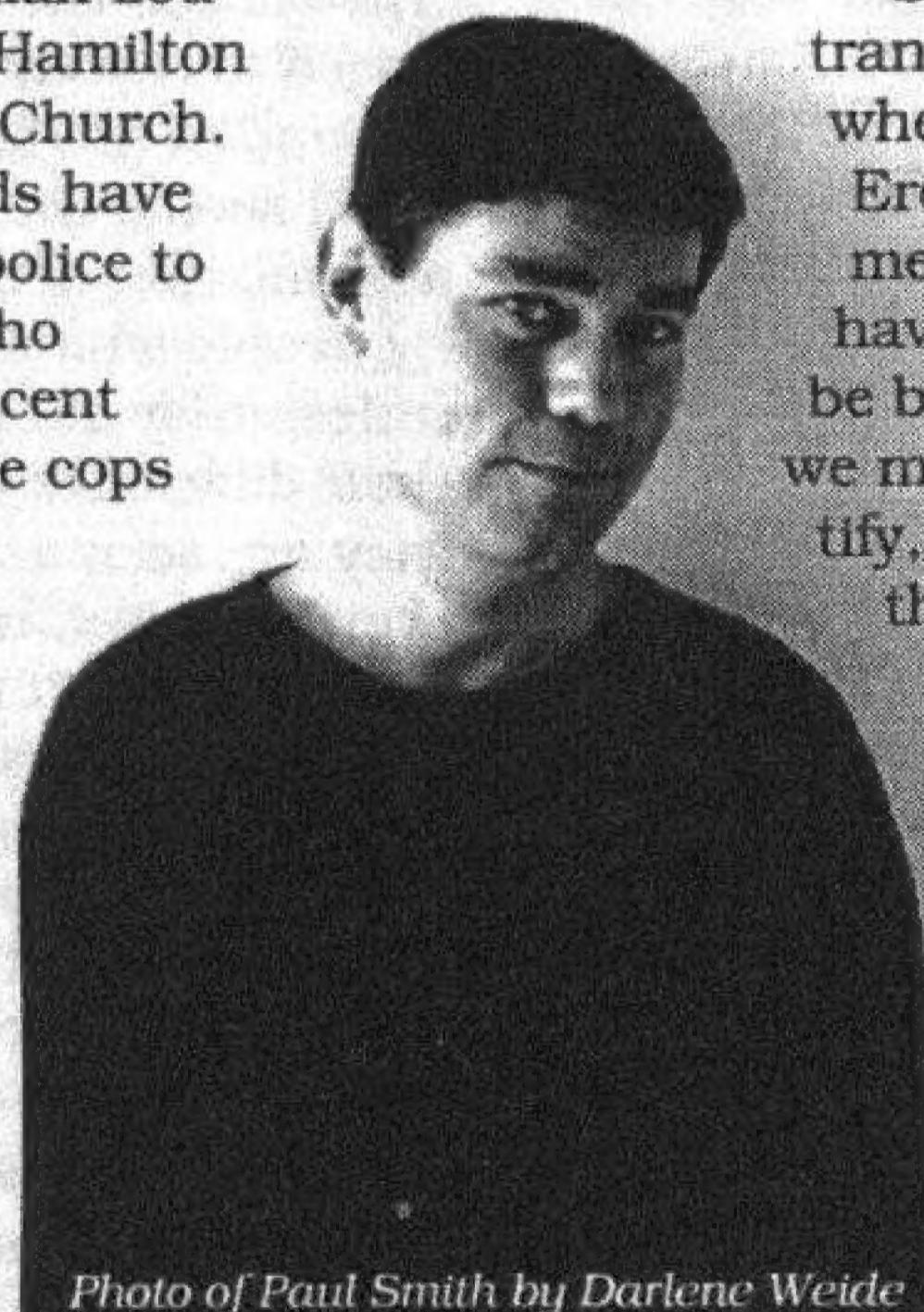


Photo of Paul Smith by Darlene Weide



The Gadfly Bi

An Intentionally Annoying Column
To Stimulate Or Provoke
Thinking By Way Of Persistent
Irritating Criticism
By Adrienne Davis

With apologies to Lea Delaria

Q: What's the difference between a lesbian and a dyke?

A: About thirty thousand dollars a year.

A friend of mine, Zenith, and I were discussing the queer vs. assimilation debate the other day at a coffee shop. She looked at me and asked "AJ, do you identify yourself as queer?"

I looked down into my biohazard coffee mug, searching for some appropriate answer that would be honest while boosting my sagging radical credentials. "Well let's see. If straight, white, and satisfied with your genetic gender is 'normal' then as a woman-loving woman of African descent, I would say I'm queer."

"But you don't seem..." She played with a lock of shocking pink underarm hair struggling for the words. "... queer enough. I mean, what is it exactly that you think or do that makes you queer?"

"Zee, my skin is always brown and unless I'm in transit to or from work I do my best to look like Dykewomon—terror of the straight-boys in my 'hood," I rejoined.

"Why don't you do something radical, get pierced or

arrested? All the queers are doing it."

"Because I'm not all the queers. Any way, I'm not white, so I'm one step removed from 'normal'." I held out my hand and pulled down a finger. "I'm not straight, so that's two steps removed from the mass and a step away within the black community." Another two fingers. "I've had the unmitigated audacity to tell my obvious biology that I'm second guessing it so that's another two steps." Two more fingers. "How far off the beaten path do I need to travel?" Silence from her end of the table.

It seems the queer vs assimilation debate is informed by people who are white, and unless they actually announce their difference to the world they are seen as being 'just like everyone else'. In other words, the people next door. I'll never have that, and so although I view myself as queer and show my pride by my refusal to pretend my girlfriend is a boy, I don't see the attraction of leaping up and screaming: "Hey world, notice me, I'm different!" All that most sighted people have to do is look at me and that's obvious.

People of color are reminded of their difference everyday. There is no place in my life that I can go and not be reminded of it without seriously restructuring my life. I don't desire to take on another set of loaded cultural values

that make other people comfortable, even if I happen to agree with many of the things we are fighting for. I can understand and even empathize with the desire to not be one of the 'mainstream.' That said, I don't think that, even as it works for me and some of my African brothers and sisters, queer is accurate in describing our lives.

I have always been queer, weird, strange, out-of-the-ordinary. Even before it was 'reclaimed' by activists as a badge of honor, my small circle of friends in school wore those epithets with pride. To be called weird by one of the jocks on the football team or to be rejected as too strange to be safely associated with was a valued trait. It meant you didn't think like the beautiful people, who didn't seem to think much. My standard response became thank you, as I turned away leaving some poor, perplexed jock staring at his friends not quite sure that he had lost but knowing he hadn't won. I've been strange so long I've totally taken it for granted. Many other black-folk that I've talked to about this (queer or not) feel the same way. After a while you just accept your difference and say, "Yeah, I'm different and your point is..."

There is a part of this brouhaha that makes me nervous as well. In school I

SEE GADFLY, PAGE 18

Bisexuels in the Pews

by Paul Smith

While there have been a number of articles in the press about the ordination and membership of gays and lesbians in religious sects, nothing has been written about the experience of bisexuals.

Bisexuals are there. They are clergy, they are members of the congregation. But are they known as "bisexuals?" Generally not.

Robert Cromy, Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in San Francisco, agrees that bisexuals are very much a part of the religious community. But, he says, this "depends on who does the defining. For example, there is a bishop who just recently came out as gay, but has been married for many years, continues to be married, and has children and grandchildren. He identifies as gay, and does not identify as bisexual." Cromy also knows of one member of the clergy who would identify as straight, but in view of her activities is clearly bisexual.

When asked why there are few out bisexuals in the Episcopal Church, Cromy articulately expresses the view of many people interviewed, both gay and straight. "Gays and lesbians have money and power, and have a clear set of issues. But for bisexuals [pause] what is the issue? I mean, are they really discriminated against?"

A long-time member of a Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) congregation in San Francisco expressed many of the same sort of questions. When asked if there were open bisexuals in his congregation, he stated, "Some of us may

have been married in the past ... People take on different identifications at different times. There are certainly more bisexuals in the Bay Area. Some of the jobs that I have taken working with straight people have enlightened me to the fact that certain married males would let me know that they once had gay relationships."

After beating around the bush like this, he finally came clean. "Bisexuals may be more comfortable in a straight church as opposed to MCC, which is seen as more gay and lesbian."

This gay man's agnosticism about bisexuality was apparent; in order to help me write the article he even suggested that I could find some bisexuals if I contacted some of "those men who advertise in the personal ads" and ask them what their experience has been. I told him that for me that would not be necessary.

Rabbi Allen Bennett has been an out bisexual rabbi in the Reform tradition since the campaign against the Briggs Initiative (a California initiative in the mid-70s to keep gays and lesbians from working in schools). He gives frequent speeches on sexuality, works in Jewish organizations, and from 1979 to 1982 was a rabbi at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, a gay and lesbian synagogue in San Francisco. He later joined Congregation Havat Shalom, "where they have used the word 'bisexual' in the literature from the beginning. I don't know that Sha'ar Z'Hav does, although it may."

He states, however, that he came out as the first openly "gay" rabbi. While he referred to himself as bisexual, he stated that he is primarily known as a gay man, particularly since he has been dating men exclusively for so many years.

Rabbi Bennett reports that he has felt relatively universal acceptance by the Jewish community, "although the conservatives still have serious conundra" about the issue.

He observes that while rabbis have come out as bisexual to their gay congregations, in the straight congregations they are closeted. "There are not many bisexuals among rabbis; not many [in the congregations] would know of their uniqueness. As more bisexuals come out there will be backlash and discussion. There is still more liability [for coming out as bisexual]."

He explains that gay rabbis and gay congregations are not an issue in the Reform tradition now. Rabbis used to be required to undergo psychological testing which inquired about sexual fantasies and practices. This no longer exists. The list off of which potential rabbis are selected does not have criteria based on sexuality or gender. However, he feels that there is a certain inherent exclusion of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in the process whereby rabbis are chosen by congregations; many congregations request that their rabbis be married.

The Unitarians seem to have a different approach. A bisexual couple who are active

SEE PEWS, PAGE 22

Currents of the Spirit

By Elias Farajajé-Jones

Spirituality is us; it is our everyday life. As a bi-fag of afrikan and native american descent, the Yoruba word ASHÉ (which means strength, power, the power to make things happen) clearly explains for me the inner spiritual power of my bisexuality. This is STRENGTH which is internal, integral. This is not the POWER of Power relationships, this is not POWER over, this ASHÉ within and without.

Spirituality, in my context, is the art of wholeness. It is the aesthetic of wholeness, the politics of wholeness, the paths of wholeness. It is about the transcending of apparent opposites; it is about liberation. Our spiritualities point us towards right relationships with our Mother, the Earth, with our 4-legged sisters and brothers, and with each other. Justice and equality are crucial parts of spirituality, of wholeness.

There is no contradiction between our sexualities and our spiritualities. In many traditional cultures, the shaman is one who navigates between the visible and the invisible worlds, one who dreams, one who has visions, one who heals. Shamans are often those who in our cultures might be considered to be lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender women and men. However, to apply these terms to them is to violate their realities, their understandings of sexualities and gender. We must see them as they see themselves. This opens up to us a multiplicity of sexualities and much gender confusion. Thus, in a traditional culture a "woman" or a "man" who

"cross-dresses" and lives as a "man" or a "woman," sees "her/himself" as a "man" or as a "woman" and therefore would not understand a sexual relationship with someone of the same gender as their birth-assigned gender as being a same-sex encounter, nor would "she/he" understand this as "cross-dressing."

We must be careful not to just take what we want out of people of color

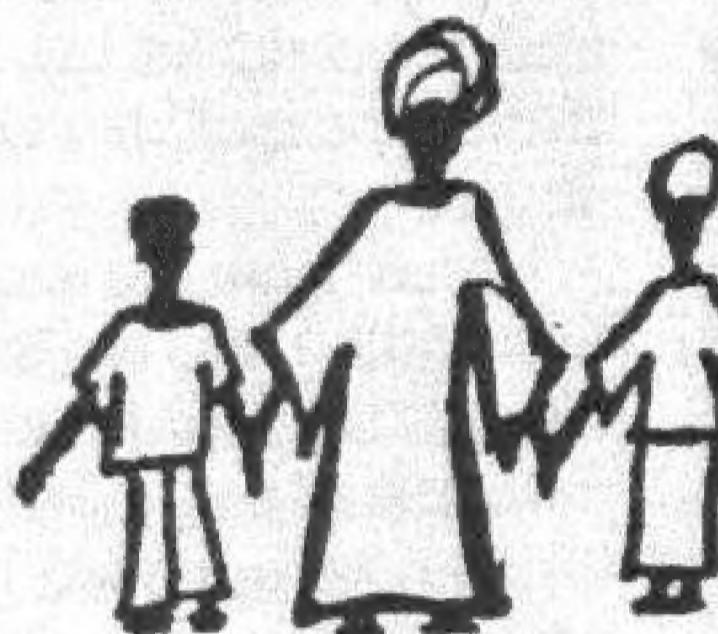
cultures without respecting the context and the visions of the world out of which they grow. We must also acknowledge the fact that many of the written sources are dominated by information about people who would be biologically defined as men. There is still much to be learned about women-identified women's sexualities and spiritualities in these traditions. For example, we know about the Sufi male homoerotic poetry; where is the Sufi lesboerotic poetry? (*Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Annemarie Schimmel; U. of North Carolina Press, 1975). Does such a thing exist? Or did compulsory heterosexuality silence it, making it invisible?

Already, when we look at the role of Two Spirit women and men in certain Native American cultures, we become aware of the fact that they represent another gender category which transcends the female/male binary unit. These Two Spirit people, known by different names in different indigenous languages (such as

nadle in Navajo or *winkte* in Lakota, *hwame/algha* (women "cross-dressers"/men "cross-dressers") in Mojave), are often those who mediate between the visible and the invisible worlds and who have gifts of healing, vision and prophecy. (*Living The Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology*, compiled by Gay American Indians; St. Martin's Press, 1988)

Part of the transgressivity of bisexuality is that it says love knows no gender; most bisexuals do not choose their partners on the basis of their biologically assigned gender, but rather on the basis of those elements of their personality that make them attractive to the other. This, however, can mean that someone might be attracted by elements in a woman or man that are not part of how we are socialised to perceive members of the female or male gender. This sort of gender subversion, or better yet the subversion of identity based on biological gender, is extremely problematic for many people.

In African religious traditions such as vodun (Afro-Haitian religion) or those based in the Yoruba tradition (santeria in Cuba/Puerto Rico/United States; candomblé in Brazil), there is an understanding of gender that is very different from that to which most people in the United States are accustomed. For example, in the Yoruba religion there are manifestations of the divine (orisha) that are bi-gendered. Furthermore, a female orisha can manifest through a man, just as a male orisha can manifest through a woman. Whatever the gender of the orisha or the initiate, the newborn initiate who is attached to a particular orisha is



considered to be the Iyawo or the bride of that orisha. (*African Creative Expressions of the Divine*, Kortright Davis and Elias Farajajé-Jones, editors; Howard University School of Divinity Press). One speaks of being mounted by the orisha, when the orisha manifest through the bodies of the initiates. This term carries definite erotic imagery with it. The body is not only the temple, but it is also the place where the Spirit manifests. If sexuality can be perceived as a gift, then the body is to be celebrated.

In India, hijras are "men" who dress and live as women and whose lives focus on being devotees of Bahuchara Mata, one of the forms of the Great Mother Goddess experienced in India. In fact, they are neither men nor women; they would seem to represent another gender. Because of their relationship to Bahuchara Mata and the female creative energy that she represents, they play a special role in Indian culture as ritual performance artists at births, weddings, and temple festivals. (*Neither Man nor Woman: The Hijras of India*, Serena Nanda. Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1988. A *Lotus of Another Color: An Unfolding of the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Experience*; Rakesh Ratti, editor. Alyson, 1993.) (This book is of great value. Thanks to the photographs by Gill Thadani, a pioneering Indian lesbian independent scholar working on traditions of liminal sexualities in Indian history, it gives us images of sacred lesboerotic art, as well as a powerful image of transcending gender dualism).

Androgyny, which embraces what is considered to be both female and male, points to the wholeness of personhood. This is often a very important aspect of the shaman/ritual technician, who is often a cross-dresser and performance artist. Ritual is performance and performance is sacred ritual in which the body and the senses are important.

Erotophobia, the fear of the power of the erotic, which stems from a desire to control women's bodies (for profit) and to police desire, has created the false dichotomy between sexualities and spiritualities. If sex is evil, how can it have anything to do with the realm of the spirit? But sex is not evil; it is also a path of spirit. When we move beyond our internalised erotophobia, we realise that we have sometimes experienced sex as an ek-static

(standing outside of oneself) experience. The experience of orgasm, however defined, can be envisioned as both ecstasy and implosion. When we dance in our queer spaces, we are sometimes also taken onto levels of intense implosion/ecstasy. Masturbation can become a spiritual path for reclaiming our bodies, for learning to love our bodies, for feeling our bodies as full of sacred, playful, joyful ASHÉ.

If sex is a path of the spirit, why don't we place our sex toys, our condoms and our dental dams on our altars? Sex can be the path of the body leading us to open up to another dimension. It is a high expression of wholeness, for the spirit can be encountered in the erotic and the erotic encountered in the spirit. The mystic imagery of many religious traditions takes us into the realm of the spirit where

there is no conflict between the erotic and the spiritual. If anything, what we have really been talking about is erotic spiritualities and/or spiritual eroticisms. Living as bisexuals already points us in the direction of moving between all sorts of boundaries; our recognition of the currents of spirit in our sexualities and currents of sexualities in spirit is a crucial part of our path of liberation, of our journeys towards wholeness. ASHÉ.

elias farajajé-jones (aka manuel kalldas kongo) is an anarchist spanish-speaking bi-fag/ritual technician/ performance artist of afrikan native american (tsalagi/cherokee) Ibero-Irish descent who lives and agitates in the district of columbia. he is also a professor of history of religions at the howard university school of divinity.



While putting together this issue on Spirituality & Healing, we often thought of our friend David Lourea, August 26, 1945 - November 10, 1992. Photo courtesy of David May.





Building a National Spirituality/Sexuality Coalition

By Loraine Hutchins

Seventy-five people spent September 10-12 discussing how our spiritual beliefs and sexualities meet. Among them were three blatant bisexuals – myself, Jim Frazin from San Francisco, and Efrain Gonzalez from New York. We met at Kirkridge, a center of church-related progressive thought and action for fifty years, across a Pennsylvania valley from the towers of Three Mile Island.

It was the first time I was in a mixed (straight/gay, male/female, Christian/pagan/Hindu/Jew/atheist) group where people were talking

thoughtfully and pragmatically about how to build coalitions to fight the Right, AND to do it by linking spirituality to sexuality.

What was most interesting to Jim, Efrain and me was finding ourselves in a group that, as Efrain said, "is supposed to hate and fear us," but was friendly and supportive instead. A number even acknowledged looking to us as role models of where they want to be. Many of the church folk who attended are closeted as polyfidelitous people or "people supporting post-marriage relationships."

We in the bi movement often talk about reaching out more to heterosexually-identified bisexuals, and to heterosexual allies. But experiencing such breakthroughs is sadly still too rare. I finally felt heard, understood, and appreciated.

It's great to get a different perspective from a queer one. For instance, some participants saw the lesbian/gay/bi movement as already united. I heard many expressions of envy/admiration towards queers. Several people said they felt gay liberation shows the way for other sexual minorities to come forth.

Polyfidelitous folk identify as a

sexual minority in a way, because they acknowledge they pass as monogamous in society and need to come out, to fight for their rights and for alternative family forms to exist and be protected.

One of the conference organizers was Dr. Deborah Anapol, author of *Love Without Limits*, a great little book written in the voices of people who love more than one, committedly. She identifies as bi and runs IntiNet Resource Center. On Saturday Anapol and Ryam Nearing (who runs PEP, another polyfidelity resource group in Hawaii that holds annual conferences) spoke about four different kinds of multiple relationships: 1) neotribal intimate networks, 2) polyfidelity, 3) open marriage, and 4) non-responsible forms like cheating.

A married Catholic priest who has written textbooks on human sexuality spoke about global efforts to share sex education information. He connects those efforts to the emergence of women worldwide and a willingness to talk about issues of honesty, consent and abuse.

Ray Lawrence came to organize others to fight false charges of abuse in certain day care centers. Steve Torma spoke about the "resacrilizing of eros" through deep ecology – "realizing that we are not just humans on earth, we are the earth thinking about herself." Robert Rimmer, a novelist who's sold ten million books on sexuality topics, spoke about his experiences in the publishing industry and how a new generation is now discovering his books.

As one of the seven workshop leaders, I spoke about feeling like a motherless child, because people in this society

SEE COALITION, PAGE 22



Kwanzaa

By Kuwaza Imara

One task that an oppressed people take on as they seek to liberate themselves is to reclaim their heritage. They must redefine the culture and create traditions that reflect the positive aspects of their heritage as well as their past colonial culture.

It was in this spirit of redefining cultural tradition that the



African American cultural celebration of Kwanzaa was developed. Although the foundations of Kwanzaa are found in traditional African culture, this specific form was developed in 1967 by Maulana Karenga, founder of the Los Angeles based U.S. organization.

Kwanzaa is an African American tradition that seeks to spread and institutionalize a set of values that can provide a basis for organizing the African American community. Kwanzaa is celebrated in evening community gatherings from December 26 through December 31, and in each person's home on January 1.

Kwanzaa is a Kiswahili word that means "first fruits". It is an occasion to appreciate individual and collective struggles and triumphs of the closing year, as



well as a time of rededication to our struggle.

One of the central features of the Kwanzaa celebration is the NGUZO SABA or seven principles. The principles were developed to provide a value system to aid in the cultural/mental liberation of African American people. The seven principles are:

UMOJA/unity

KUJICHAGALIA/self determination

UJIMA/collective work and responsibility

UJAMAA/cooperative economics

NIA/purpose

IMANI/faith

The symbols of Kwanzaa are:

The MKEKA - the straw mat - representing the foundations, traditions and history of African people.

The KINARA - the candle holder - symbolizing the first born, the ancestors.

The MISHUMAA - the candles - which represent the NGUZO SABA.

The KIKOMBE CHA UMOJA - the unity cup - a reminder and inspiration of the unity of African American people.

The MUHINDI - the ears of corn - which represent the

children, the future generations. An ear of corn represents each child in a home. Homes having no children have a MUHINDI to represent the biological potential and/or extended family responsibilities.

The MAZAO - the crops of the earth - which also symbolize the fruits of the collective labor of the community.

The ZAWADI - the gifts that are given as rewards for achievements and growth.

The BANDERA YA TAIPA - the flag of the African American nation in exile - with colors red, black and green.

Since 1967 the celebration of Kwanzaa has spread throughout the African American community in America as well as through African communities in the Diaspora.

The celebration of Kwanzaa provides an opportunity for



African Americans in the bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender communities not only to deepen our connection in the African American community but also to rededicate our energies to the struggle against racism, homophobia, heterosexism, and sexism.

[For further reading:
Kwanzaa by Cedric McClester, published by Grubbs & Thomas, \$5.95.]

Fiction

The full sun made the tarpaper hot on the day the teacher met an angel on her roof. The tar paper was covered with something like wee chipped rock and it stung the teacher's feet as she walked across the rooftop to empty the gutterbucket.

The angel was leaning with her back to the building, and whistling the song "Cielito Lindo." She looked like a girl with bobbed black hair wearing a pale green dress.

Bent up to the effusive blue sky the skin of her face was pale as cartoons.

No one else in the building was supposed to have roof access. The teacher was annoyed.

The teacher asked the girl how she got up onto the roof and the girl told her about being an angel and said that it was a well known thing that if you left a dish of holy water on your roof - she indicated the gutterbucket - an angel would sometimes land to drink. She said she saw the nice pure water set out and felt welcomed, invited. The teacher formed a dirty look. The girl mentioned, talking slow, that it was poor fortune to make an angel leave, like breaking an opal, or seeing dark cats cross your path. The teacher could not quite think of what to do at that point, and she went inside the apartment to put on her shoes and open a root beer.

The girl followed inside. The teacher was having a root beer in a coarse glass mug. Two moons of lemon floated on the root beer, the tattered yellow rinds on the floor near her shoes. The girl sat down right beside the teacher on the wood floor and took a sip of her soda. "Mmmmm, nice," she said, and she asked the teacher if she didn't just love lemons. The teacher nodded

but she did not drink her root beer anymore. "Lemons are like love," the girl said, "they're so pure. There's no confusing them with anything else. It's

The hickey left a fierce feeling on the skin of her neck and the room continued to be dizzy with lemons, and the scent of them. The teacher wanted to touch her neck but did not. She had to admire something like that. Anyone

who could just lean over and give someone a hickey like that was someone she had to take seriously. She got up to take her root beer glass to the kitchen, and the thick mug felt like it weighed a great amount. When the teacher came back and saw that the girl had gone outside to peer at the city from the roof, she locked the slotted glass door. During the night she dreamed that the girl was lying out there moonbathing, and the prickly tarpaper was hurting her bottom and the blades of her shoulders. And once she thought she heard sharply, "Hey lemonhead, let me in."

The next morning the teacher got up and went to the school where she taught the four-year-olds, who had developed a strange fad of talking about themselves in the third person and commenting always on everyone's shoes. During the day the teacher worried about whether the girl would get off her roof and how. She had not unlocked the slotted glass door, but the girl had found a way up regardless of locks. She could get down, if she wanted to. But would she want to, was all.

When the teacher got home the girl was reposed on her

The Heat of High Places

by Jeannine Arlette

like lemons are their own worlds." Then the girl picked up a rind and she said, "Yep, lemons." And she ran the rind across the teacher's cheek and looked down into the teacher's eyes and sent the teacher off into a long dream of lemons. In the dream the teacher forgot all the main things about lemons - like - they are a citrus fruit, they grow in Florida, they are popular used with meringue in a pie. Instead she remembered only the fragrance, shine and tune of lemons; the way the juice spangled the air when you opened one, the trickiness of the taste that sprang to life in your mouth and played with your throat; the joy of a lemon in your hand, solid, plainspoken.

Just as the teacher lost all the world to a dream of lemons, the girl leaned over and put her lips down plush on the teacher's neck and drew and drew until a red mark in the shape of a bow rose to the surface. At first in the teacher's mind the mild pain and the strange pulling feeling were still tied up with the whole idea of lemons, but then she began to come back to herself and consider things more carefully.

bed, having a cigarette. It was apparent for the first time how thin the girl really was; she was extremely slight and the pale dress rested on her skin like a petal. For some reason the teacher was rather touched to see that the girl had made an ashtray of a soda can. She had been very careful with her ashes.

When the girl said, "How was work?" the teacher started telling her a story about Liselruth. Liselruth was a serious little four-year-old who wore dresses trimmed with ric-a-rac. During recess, Liselruth had been riding one of those children's toy trucks, and when she stood up the truck stuck between her legs with the cab out front and the dumpster behind so that it was like she was stuck riding a horse. Later, when Liselruth came up and stood next to the teacher, looking oh so sad, the teacher said, "What's the matter sweetie pie, did you get scared when you tried to get off that truck?" and Liselruth said in a quiet voice, "Yes. Liselruth had a tractor stuck to her bum."

The girl stopped smoking her cigarette and laughed and the teacher was laughing and in moments the bedsheets between them were threshed into messy curves. The thing was, the teacher had never liked people who swapped reality for some made-up world. "I am an angel" - it seemed so flimsy and powerless. If there was going to be talk about miracles let it be about actual cases of love and fucking and the ways ordinary people can change and bloom overnight. Things you could sink your teeth into. But when the girl took the teacher's hand and moved it beneath the faded green dress, until the feel of the girlish stomach

dazzled the teacher's hand into going further, it was obvious something divine was developing. It was obvious that somebody should get up and draw the luminous drapes.

~~~~~

"What was the girl doing here?" the teacher asked one time, the girl being an angel and all. The girl told her it was because she was fallen, and she was fallen because she had once succeeded in possessing someone, not even someone young, but someone very innocent nonetheless. The girl explained that angels are all about freedom more than any other thing, and that for an angel to possess someone was like a doctor spreading germs, or a musician destroying beautiful instruments. But more and more the teacher didn't care what the girl put forth about herself, and she even played along, calling the

Angels are all about freedom. For an angel to possess someone was like a doctor spreading germs.

girl angel cake, and making small halos all over her with her tongue.

On Friday nights the girl and the teacher would walk down away from their streets to a low, lampless part of town where they would wait a long time or a short time with their backs up against an old tenement building. Suddenly a fast black car would pull up and handsome young boys would jump out saying "Cuantos, cuantos!" while pulling something out of a used cigarette pack with the precise fingers of

tellers. The thing about Black Rose brand was that they used some kind of perfume to make it smell better, a heavy floral scent you could taste as well as smell. Some people complained about it. But to the teacher it resembled the smell of a sacred place and soon she and the girl would be walking the dark streets with nostrils smelling like churches and eyes as heavy as hearts. And before the night was ended they would clasp hands and slip into the mean looking park, where so many lost and holy citizens slept and drank and peed, and there they would dance together as though the world was safe.

By the time they got home they were itching like mad from the additives and from the substance itself, but even the itching was nice. The girl would ruff up the teacher all over with her turfy hair and her nails, and then the teacher ran her nails over the girl like loose change and used her cider colored curls to smooth the scratch away. The teacher

took her tongue and made the small halo shapes inside the girl's smoothest places and the girl acted similarly. But there was something about the slow movement of the drug that was like waves that billow and billow and never break, and so they could not get each other to come no matter how they tried. They stayed up all night driving each other crazy, sucking with delight on fingers and toes, nodding far in and deep out, and talking in ways that made no sense. Once the girl said, "Look out, it's a meadow of jokel" and the

teacher with her equally leaded lids and tongue replied, "I'm going to help you eat that thing."

The teacher was now very happy. It had never occurred to her to have a girlfriend; she had had quite a lot of boyfriends and for the most part they had not been bad at all. But it did occur to her now that if she were to have a girlfriend she would want one with thin strong arms and lips the color of pinches. The girl from the roof was like this. Not only that but the teacher had always been inspired by the possibilities for two people. In groups of three or more, people were more likely than ever to keep up their independence. What was it about two people and two people only that made the boundaries lapse to black? The teacher loved the way she moved through the streets with the girl, like a one-skinned animal. Sometimes they ran into old boyfriends who looked at her and the girl with jolted or mean or reverent or even truthful eyes, but the way it was now none of that made an impression or sense.

Only when the girl pleaded with her, "Come away with me; there's nothing else to need," did the teacher stop and draw back and feel the plaster walls around her like fine pieces of art. She had always had a thing for home.

More and more, the teacher had been growing distracted at school. She heard herself informing the children from the end of a long hollow tube, and her reactions to them were skewed by inappropriate worries.

What if the girl from the rooftop actually had tracked her to her home, instead of

merely being vagrant? That seemed so unnatural, maybe even depraved.

-And why did the girl always seem to want so much more from her, even now that they were lovers, living together like a cutaway of a wedding day, all dances and vows and radiant embraces?

-Why would the girl's eyes constantly have that dug-up and hammered on appearance; and who taught her to move her mouth that way, like nobody else on earth?

One Saturday evening the teacher and the girl got drunk on a fleecy red Beaujolais. The slotted glass door and the windows were wide open. In

the breeze that cast a squabble of candlelight over her face, the girl extracted from beneath her dress a dagger with a glowy green handle and a mildly curved tip. Her eyes hooked up with the teacher's. "People are lucky. They're basically good, just doomed to fuck up. An angel however bears full choice to accept or disavow the grace inherent in its nature. There is sometimes a lethal creeping curiosity. You'll never have to know what a burden it is to be introduced into existence with complete comprehension of the big picture, the broad meaning that colors every earthly experience and makes it

equally human. Forbidden to ever make a move towards that level of perception where everything appears relative within a herd of circumstances, charged by sensings of one's self worth. For the angel to descend to this level is as difficult as taking a life and as physically riveting as dipping your toes into lye to discover to what extreme you can know that you have feelings. It's a fragmenting experience to the angelic soul's integrity and interferes with the ability to communicate hope."

The teacher removed the dagger from where the girl held it a-point to her own breast. She asked the girl to quit acting so preposterous and reminded her that

she didn't appreciate that kind of theatrical muckety muck. But when the girl scooted her dress up her knees and climbed atop the teacher and kissed and kissed her slow like lollipops, her intentions became so inexact that she could have been persuaded to take part in a thousand different overwrought scenarios as simply as flowerpetals give up their stems and take their parts alongside all the other detritus in the wind-lit interiors of hurricanes.

Through the flurry there was still a certain speck of the teacher's being that retained concern over the source of



people's strength, that which was necessary and exquisite in them. Was the importance of existing to perfect your integrity? Only when all the pieces worked together could a person move through the world in a way that was wholly truthful and beautiful. Or, was such a thing impossible, the whole idea of it a weird frivolity? Maybe the only honesty was her present state, lost in space and open sky, an angel's interior landscape - a realm beyond instinct claiming snails, fish eggs, dust mites and skinworms; spectral creatures delirious with skill and certainty.

The following afternoon when the teacher came home from work, the girl was not waiting on the bed as usual. The single room revealed nothing but quiescent air and sun. Then, out on the roof there was a sound like a breath being taken back, and the teacher stepped through the glass door just in time to see the girl perched wavily on the ledge, staring down away from open space. "Holy mo-don't," the teacher said, and the girl stepped down from the

ledge. "You were going to jump," the teacher said. The girl turned her back towards her brusquely as she walked into the house. "Was not." The teacher stared at the footprint where the girl's foot had come like iron, dropping back onto the tar.

The next morning the teacher came home early. She had quit her job and given zero weeks notice. She told the girl, "Where to, angel?" The angel kissed the teacher's throat and they fell to the floor like they were made of moths. Later the teacher left for the bank to take out all the money.

The teacher hadn't lost her wariness of the girl, who might or might not be hoaxing her over. But how the girl's eyes ran wild in their sockets and how she would stare point-blank at the sun for hours and suffer no damage except a muscular trembling. These things made the teacher sit and gouge the floor until her nails broke and bled and she grew fierce and desolate and hopeful. She thought of that low lampless part of her town and began to imagine other low, strange lampless places in other towns and other countries. Huge images rose up in domes from her head: pelicans screaming at the moon, acreages of flowers the colors of infants' dreaming, holy cobras swarming the land, gods and goblins, bangtail ponies, buddah-headed elephants roping their great trunks up to the skies. She saw the places where afterbirth is honored and given

burial as a noble soul that perished to protect a baby. Where barrenness results from drinking out of a bowl of water into which a star has fallen. Where ghosts come and steal the colors from your eyes when you die. Where people sever fingers and toes to remember to adore those who are absent.

The girl was walking down the neighborhood's streets and soon she could see the ocean, glinty between the buildings, past the tall day of downtown. When she got there she removed her dress and sat down in the chilled morning sand. The ocean flexed and swelled and launched little bits of light. The ocean was a moving window, a blue reality, and the girl stared into it. Today was unusual; the ocean did not always host such a generous portrait of heaven. In the tide's mirrored image of the sky's enormous simplicity, only the clouds seemed to graze each other, whereas all creatures down in the ocean's grip were connected by its intimate fluid. On land there were neither of these simplicities.

The sand was growing warm as flannel beneath the girl's bottom. She looked from the ocean to the sky to the ocean again and said to herself, "Fool." The girl's back was gaining the heat of the early sun, and by a fluke of the light her shoulder blades began to shine the high violet of the steepest curves of wings, and by a fluke of the light the ocean held clouds like white pure sponges. The girl stared into them and between them and wondered what was so bad about wanting to distract and confuse every living thing.

**Jeannine Arlette is a gardener in Seattle, WA. This is her first published work.**

## untitled/Dajenya

I attempted to become more bisexual as service to God. One day, while driving down the New Jersey Turnpike, I saw a vision in the clouds: a giant vagina beckoning me. I knew it was time.

Dajenya is a self-defined bisexual lesbian and African-American Jewish writer, single mother and psychology student. She lives in Richmond, CA with her two sons.

## A Sense of Creating Change™

by Gerard Palmeri

Creating Change™ is an annual conference for gay, lesbian, and bisexual activists sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. There is absolutely no way I could relate everything about the experiences of this conference. It is a five day marathon of emotionally powerful workshops and speakers. It is a gathering of our most incredible leaders. It is an intense conference which takes as its mission to challenge all attendees including the presenters.

This year, Creating Change™ was held November 10-14 in Durham, NC.

Creating Change™ is catching the "red eye" so as not to miss too much work ▼ the smell of tobacco in the air ▼ arriving "wasted" ▼ exciting ▼ the sound of crickets in downtown Durham ▼ "Hi, how

are you?" ▼ fucking intense ▼ meeting some of the best minds in the movement ▼ unsafe ▼ loving ▼ challenging yourself ▼ challenging others ▼ battling racism ▼ meeting the locals ▼



meeting people from all over ▼ responsibility ▼ battling classism ▼ supporting each other ▼ getting kissed ▼ hearing an HIV+ man say he knows he's killing people because he refuses to practice safer sex ▼ hope ▼ saying, "Hi" to Urvashi ▼ learning how the Right intends to do away with us all ▼ taking care of ourselves ▼ being vulnerable ▼ being hurt ▼ dismantling all systems of oppression ▼ talking about myself in the middle of a room of 200 people ▼ battling sexism ▼ joking with George ▼ meeting beautiful men and women ▼ plotting how to fight the right ▼ working on my own shit ▼ schmoozing ▼ kissing Marlon ▼ listening ▼ getting my butt slapped by Robert ▼ race, class, & gender ▼ kissing Derek ▼ inclusion ▼ laughing ▼ crying ▼ solidarity ▼ tiring but worth it.

photo: Darlene Weide

## POOP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

tive and bisexual alternatives to St. Augustine. Her latest appearance in San Francisco was nothing less than one of the most spiritually uplifting experiences I have ever had.

We also see in "straight media" gay and lesbian activists (where are those bisexuals?) chatting with the President in the Oval Office, the judiciary striking down homophobic and biphobic laws, RuPaul on MTV, much positive coverage of the March On Washington, to name a few

strikes against the sexually repressive Empire.

Where is my own spiritual center? I honestly don't know. I had to hide my queerness (and a lot of other characteristics of mine) in Southern Baptist and Lutheran churches while I was growing up. Now that I identify so strongly as bi, I look at churches, and consequently religion, with suspicion and distrust.

I have similar feelings about New Wave, liberal and traditional forms of psychology.

personal growth, therapy, and healing. I am tired of therapists doing Nan Parks imitations while finding me quaint, at best.

But in the midst of this angst I have found hope. I have found therapists, straights, gays and lesbians, clergy and members of religious communities who are truly concerned about the well-being of my soul. They give me hope.

[Editor's note: "jones" means addiction.]

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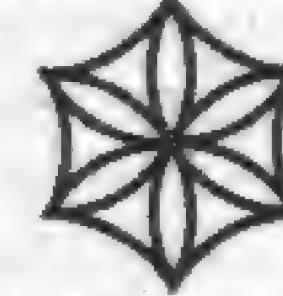
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# Yids & Fencesitters

by Mark Silver

The bookstore keeper's Eastern European accent made her sound even more earnest to me, while I shook my head and tried to keep from laughing. "There are men who cannot even look at a woman, and they can't help who they are; they should just control themselves; but there are men who are, they call themselves 'bisexual,' they need to make the effort to control their impulses and live by God's commandments, to be married and raise children."

In the sunlight outside the store, her words sunk in deeper—this was a brand of Judaism with which I had never had any direct experience. I have always identified strongly as both Jewish and, once I

made it out of the closet, queer. But before coming to San Francisco, I had never let my queerness and my Judaism intersect. When I did let them intersect, it happened in safe space with friends and at Sha'ar Zahav, the little synagogue in the Castro. This Jewish homophobia was new to me.

As I was growing up, my dad always told me something he learned from our rabbi. Whenever some bit of ritual had been left out, or some rule seemed too stringent, he said, "God appreciates whatever you have to offer. Every little bit counts, as long as you feel Jewish." And so I grew up feeling very Jewish, and comfortable in all things Judaic.

This feeling has lasted and grown through my agnosticism, dabbles in Zen Buddhism and Paganism, and coming out. I'm amazed to find that many of my friends who are queer are Jewish as well. I'm close to more Jews now than I was as a kid in a largely Jewish suburb of Washington, D.C. I cherish and honor many of the traditions and rituals, more than I ever expected to as a *pre-mensch* (Yiddish word meaning vaguely a strong, mature person), squirming at having to go to Hebrew school two afternoons a week and Sundays.

As a Jew, I feel I hold a "middle ground" in U.S. society. As a descendant of Europeans, my skin is pink and I share in

## GADFLY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

read all the time. The librarians and I were on a first name basis throughout my school years and I had access to the coveted 'back stacks' that weren't supposed to be checked out of the library. I was harassed mercilessly for my diction, grammar, and vocabulary because they were not 'black' enough for some people. Illiteracy, disregarding education, and nihilism seemed to be an essential part of some of my classmates' black identity. I thought they were playing right into the hands of the white man but they saw things differently. I was the white man's toady because I wanted to go to college, get a graduate degree,

and write books. I believed that the only way I could ever make anything of myself in the white man's world was to learn the rules of his game and play that game better than he could himself. Tragically, we were both right in our own ways.

In the end we had to agree to disagree and I never got into their heads far enough to understand why they felt I was cozying up when I wanted to simply beat the odds and media prophecies of what black life was supposed to be. Those experiences taught me to be distrustful of those who want to essentialize group identity. Group identity forming the core of my personal identity has not worked for me.

I'm queer because I'm not anything like my sister, mother, or father or any of my blood-kin that I've been told about or met. I'm queer because I choose to love one specific woman. I'm queer because I read Gibson, Walker, Hawking, Fritjof Capra, Paglia, bell hooks, and because I think that the hacker is one of the great cultural icons of my time. I'm queer because I stand up for human rights, not just my own. I'm assimilationist because I'd one day like to move up the income ladder so I make enough to call myself a bi-lesbian and not a bi-dyke.

Until next time, I remain, as always, a very strange Gadfly-bi.

Anything That Moves

# YIDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

many of the privileges given to other pink Americans in terms of access to power. I've never been pulled over by the cops and asked for my "papers," nor do people stop and stare at me when I find myself in an affluent area. But I still cringe when someone says, "I got jewed." And I remember being yelled at: "Hebe! Kike!" while sitting in front of my synagogue waiting to be picked up from Hebrew school.

These days, all the government-sponsored Christmas decorations piss the hell out of me. The national tree-lighting ceremony tells me exactly how much I belong to this country. Last December, at the post office, the man in the eagle-emblazoned shirt looked at me incredulously when I declined the Christmas stamps. "No, I don't have Christmas; I'm Jewish." "What?" he frowned. "I thought everyone had Christmas." No, not everyone does. Just give me the Grace Kelly stamps, honey, and let me go. And, beyond these vanilla Christian encounters, there are enough examples of anti-Semitism thinly-veiled by folks who say they are anti-Israel. Israel has been very bad, but it seems some on the political left, the first place I look for allies, take that government's poor conduct to mean it is open season

for Jews. Despite all of the pro-Christian anti-Semitic propaganda, I refuse to be in the closet about my Judaism religiously or politically.

I feel I take up a similar type of middle ground in my bisexuality. If I chose to close the closet door and have a different-sex partner, I could pass in the straight world (watch that

about extremism, about identity-politics, and about separating people from their opinions. My parents, more to the right politically than me, believe in the idea of balance. "I don't worry too horribly about the anti-Semitism I encounter," my dad told me. "If it swings in one direction now, from what I've seen in my life, I believe it will swing back in the other direction sooner or later."

This sort of balance is something I work hard to achieve everyday. Blind

extremism has gotten me nothing besides burnout, while placidity leaves me feeling useless. In the same way that I try to mix political work with taking care of my personal needs, I like to balance the creation of my spirituality from whole cloth with a respect for age-old traditions.

That shopkeeper who spewed such homophobic nonsense will not define my place for me. I think of bisexuality as a country without borders, anarcho-sexuality, refusing to fit into categories for someone else's convenience. As a Jew, I know about pigeon holes, being country-less, and without borders. The two fit together perfectly.

My mom describes Judaism as "something beyond religion. It is something I feel in my bones. Even when I don't light the candles, when I don't pray. I feel very Jewish and that is very important to me."

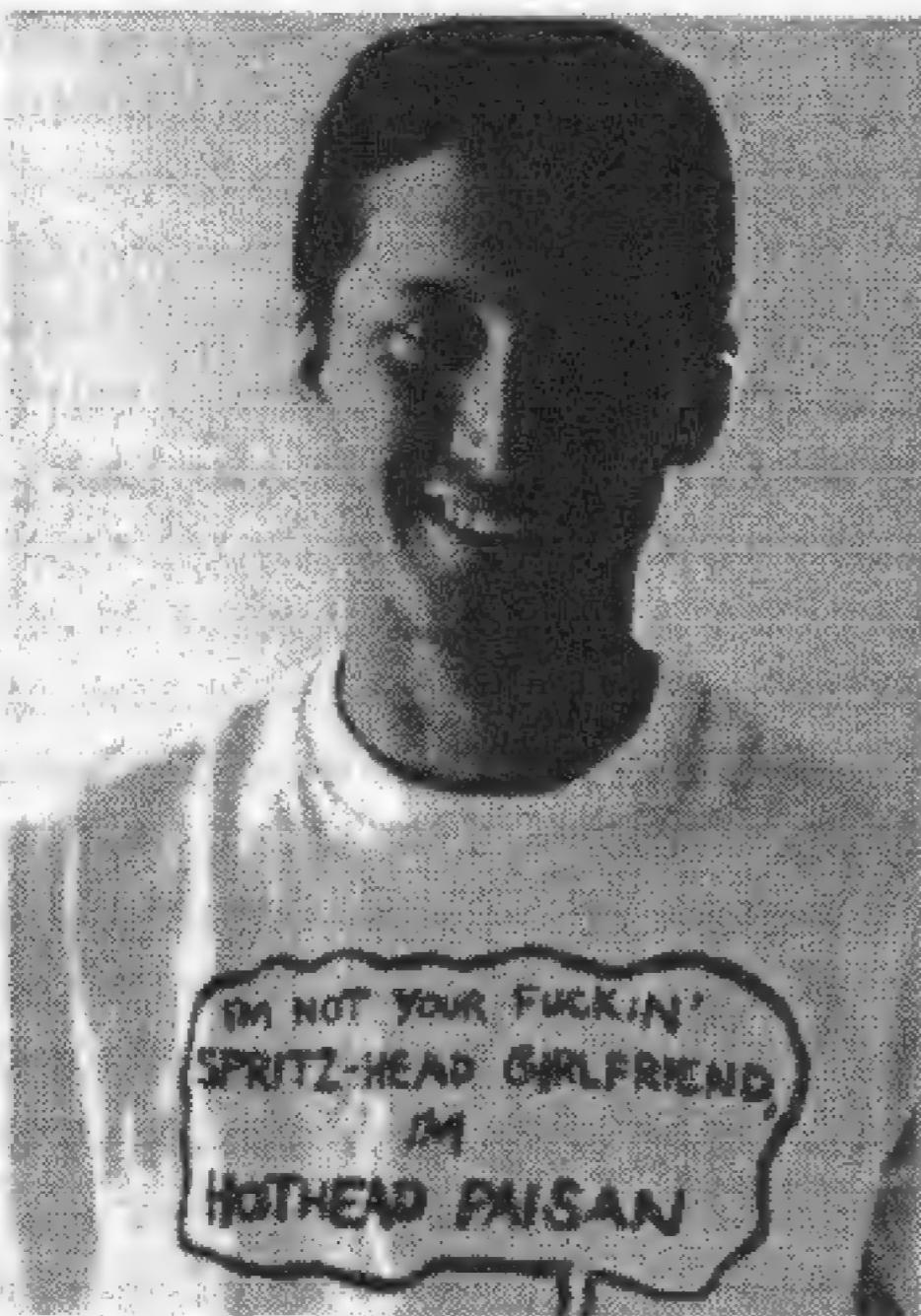
I feel what she feels, and as much as I eschew categories, I like belonging. After years of work with many wonderful folks in both the queer and the Jewish communities, I begin to feel like I do really belong somewhere. I know who I am in my bones.

My choice has been to refuse the straight closet and the gay one, the Christian closet, and the political left one. I am bisexual and queer; I am Jewish and leftist.

falsetto!). Then I could partake in all the social goodies the straights have: weddings, making out on a park bench without getting heckled or bashed, going out on a date in public, registering for dependent insurance benefits. And yet, the closet is the closet, and any queer knows some shades of the depression, fear, and self-loathing my closet held for me. The middle ground comes in having two closets. As a bisexual fag in the queer community, there is a not-so-subtle pressure on me to have a boyfriend and to deny my attraction towards women.

My choice has been to refuse the straight closet and the gay one, the Christian closet, and the political left one. I am bisexual and queer; I am Jewish and leftist.

So what? Nu, so what? This middle ground has taught me great lessons



Mark Silver is an incurable sap.  
Photo: Darlene Weide

# "If I Can't Dance I Won't Join Your Revolution"

*[quote attributed to Emma Goldman]*

As a longtime activist I sometimes don't leave much time for relaxed fun (outside of organizing that is). These days I am acutely aware of and work against the religious right which is trampling on our basic rights in cities and states across the country. "Frivolous" activities rarely tempt me. I take the times we live in very seriously.

However, I would never say that I am what one would call a party pooper. But — oh my gawd, I couldn't believe my eyes when my BiWEST San Diego Conference confirmation letter arrived. Registration, group massage, a cocktail party, entertainment, and that was only the first night! Yes, the brochure promised ... "bisexual bliss in San Diego." For me conferences are for

networking, coalition building, strategizing, and last, but certainly not least, catching up on the "dish." I was a little leery, but got over myself fairly quickly.

When I arrived on a Friday afternoon last October San Diego was of course, so San Diego. The weather was gorgeous, the white people were very tan and the airport was filled with military personnel. The most numerous were the Marines in full drag, tasteful gloves and all. Our hotel marquee welcomed BiWEST 1993 on one side; on the other side it welcomed the Naval Training Center! We shared the hotel with sailors who were just one day out of boot camp! Their families were visiting from all over the country. An interesting mix, I thought to myself. I didn't realize how interesting until Saturday night's Masquerade Ball.

The dance was the scene of a poignant real-life fairy tale. One hundred people attended. About a third of the folks came in costumes — ghosts, vamps, nuns, clowns, devils, a bisexual "Borg", Elvira, and "It".

Two sailors in their white civies crashed the party. One sailor danced with a darling gender bender man from Texas who was wearing a leather mini-skirt, fishnet stockings and high heels. Many of us wondered if the sailor "knew." As the night progressed we "knew" they "knew", and they "knew" we "knew". Hand in hand the sailors showed off their "costumes" for the couples contest. To wild ap-

plause they captured our hearts and first prize.

Both these young men from the mid-west said they thought they were bisexual. I can't imagine being eighteen years old, meeting someone at boot camp, having a homoerotic attraction and upon graduation fortuitously ending up at a bisexual dance! What a fantasy. We cautioned them. Bisexuality is a reason to be dishonorably discharged. After collecting hugs, they traded their first prize bottle of champagne for another winner's huge bag of condoms and disappeared into the night.

Emma was right. There has to be a balance of fun and politics. If there isn't, apathy and/or burn out creeps into the picture. Both are unhealthy and dangerous. I know some bisexuals are less inclined towards getting involved with activism. They don't see this as very important or interesting or even necessary. On the other hand, some activists feel social events are unnecessary. My feeling is that we have a lot to learn from each other. We must strive for a balance. The responsible, consensual celebration of bisexuality or sexuality in general is one of the most radical political acts any one of us can do in this repressive time. Certainly we must celebrate ourselves and our sexuality. However in that celebration we must also be aware of our surroundings and the precarious times in which we live. They go hand in hand and both are serious acts of love.



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Michael Szymanski hugs the man from Texas.  
Photo courtesy of Matt LeGrant.

# Queer Labor Leadership Conference

by Mark Silver

"How can I get over to San Francisco? Work is a good thing, but I want to play at night." He had called my number as the housing contact for the conference. What made this exciting for me, besides his cute voice and the word "play," was that this was a queer labor conference, and his union local was paying for him to travel and would eventually agree to pay for his hotel accommodations.

Typically I have found that when members of the queer community think "union," we imagine a collection of burly men toting large pieces of machinery with an occasional diesel dyke or mafioso thrown in for good measure. As a member of the Service Employees International Union, local 250, my image of unionists has changed radically. Having joined the SEIU Lavender Caucus (which includes transgender and bisexual in its title), I helped to plan the recent national leadership conference for queer labor, hosted by my local in our Oakland union hall this last October.

The conference started off with an all-day meeting Friday, where some twenty of us came together to form an organizing committee that will plan for Stonewall 25. This committee will ensure a visible labor presence in the Stonewall events, and will plan for a one-day conference that week to birth an international union organization to take an activist stance within labor on queer issues.

Saturday was taken up with workshops during the day: I took part in "Examining our isms," which was an inspiring

and practical three hours facilitated by Fran Buchanan, the civil rights director for the SEIU.

The other workshop I attended was "Fight the Right," facilitated by Nicole Moore, an SEIU staff member running a pilot Fight the Right project funded by the union; Beckie Capoferri, a union organizer for the Oregon Public Employees Union; and Robert Bray of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Together, we all shared our activist strategies to fight various right-wing efforts, such as the Traditional Values

Coalition, Christian Defense Coalition, and Operation Rescue. Among the most inspiring information was Capoferri's story of pivotal union organizing to defeat the Oregon initiative, and how to continue union involvement as we fight upcoming anti-queer initiatives in 1994 slated for (at least) Florida, Idaho, Michigan, Mississippi, Maine, Montana, and Georgia. The workshop inspired me enough to believe we can, if we start now, contain the Colorado virus.

I met some great people,

many of whom were involved with exciting projects, such as Tami Gold's and Kelly Anderson's video *Out at Work, Lesbian and Gay Men on the Job*, slated for PBS's "Labor X" series. And even some bisexual education went on. As the only out bisexual (that I could find) at the conference, I caused a bit of a stir during introductions at the Friday meeting, stating that not only was I member of local 250, but I also worked on *Anything That Moves*. The laughter that followed reminded me of how good a name this magazine has. I was also able, over Saturday night dinner,

to answer the question of a sister unionist. "So, you're bisexual ... what sort of women do you like?" I hemmed and hawed for a moment before I introduced my queer labor sisters and brothers to the concept of sexual orientation fluidity. "If you think my room is a mess, you should see my sex life."

By conference's end, I was sold on the idea of union activism, and even the president of my local was sold on the idea of bisexuality. Well, at least he bought an **ATM** subscription.



ATM's Mark Silver at the national queer labor conference. Photo courtesy of Bob Lewis, SEIU, Local 250

## PEWS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Unitarians (who wish to remain anonymous in this article but who are out to their fellowship) report that an active "Welcoming Committee" for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals has been established in their fellowship. The fellowship is about 1% gay, lesbian or bisexual, "and we want to make it more."

Initially their fellowship had a series of workshops, which will be followed by an outreach effort. The workshops have been on such issues as gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in the military, but none of the events have had a specifically bisexual focus. Two-hour workshops have been held for three months every other Sunday after the service for two hours. "This has been well-received by the fellowship."

The couple observes that this outreach effort is spearheaded by headquarters. The National Unitarian leadership put bisexuals into the mission of the Welcoming Committees and has even written a tract for Unitarians entitled, "What is a Bisexual?" While this found some resistance from lesbians and gays in some fellowships nationally, there was no issue about including bisexuals in the local fellowship.

Maggi Rubenstein, a long-time bisexual activist in San Francisco, feels strongly that bisexuals need to come out in religious communities and address biphobia. For example, while Rubenstein acknowledges that Cromy has done wonderfully progressive work, she sees a clear need for bisexuals to address him on the importance of bisexuals in the church.

She states that it is the

same in religious communities as it is everywhere else. Bisexuals are maligned, ostracized, and abused because of their invisibility, which is compounded by the dearth of out bisexuals. Many straights, gays, and lesbians in churches view bisexuals as suspect, confused, quaint, and heard of but not seen.

And let us not forget that many religions view sex itself as suspect. This has been true for some Christian sects even before St. Augustine. It is also true for some Jewish and Hindu sects, as well as others. Straights wonder if bisexuals break traditional marriage vows sanctified by the church more often than do gays or lesbians. It also seems to be that some who hold political power are threatened by "free-thinkers." Some will accept queers only if they are celibate.

It was extremely refreshing to hear Robert Cromy talk of the future. He believes the ultimate outcome of the current backlash by conservative elements will be the ordination and blessing of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual experience. Later there will be acceptance of sexuality outside of marriage. He gives this ten or so years.

However long it takes, acceptance, healing, and love are among the issues that religions exist to address. When religions do not address these issues, they become compromised spiritual sources.

## COALITION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

are afraid of bisexuality and all sexuality. I told the group that people say bisexuals don't exist, that there is only straight and gay. I read Dajenya's "My Foundations" poem from the

spirit section of *Bi Any Other Name*, and ended with a quote from Starhawk's bisexual love song to the earth (her April '93 speech in D.C.).

As my workshop co-leader, Jim talked about being Jewish working class, loving men as well as women, and coming out after he was over 40 and a dad. They embraced us, these straight people seeking the guts to defend their own polyfidelity. The queer people among them started coming out to us too.

Sunday morning we divided into action-oriented task groups to work on building a broad-based national spirit/sex coalition. Anapol spoke about bringing back a respect for eroticism in the culture, and about building a sex and spirit movement that can meet up with a new families movement and with grassroots and public policy organizing.

Our bisexual group proposed that the whole group form alliance with the lesbian/gay/bisexual movement, because: 1) polyfidelitous folk need to support queer family freedom issues; 2) confronting homophobia and biphobia are important to making change for all; and 3) we need to unite to lower the barriers to polyfamily formation in general.

Proposals were also made about a speakers' bureau, targeting groups with whom to build coalitions, creating sex-positive media, and making this gathering an annual event on the East Coast. We agreed to call the new coalition "The Body Sacred: A Coalition for Sexuality, Spirituality and Community".

[For more information on IntiNet and PEP, see *Bisexual Community Resources*, pages 60-62.]

# Pro Sex/Safe Sex

by Pearl Saad

- I do not have to contract HIV.  
I am capable of saying what I need.  
It is OK for me to protect myself.  
I am able and willing to talk about sex.  
I do not have to depend on someone else to  
protect me.  
I do not have to wait  
for my partner to  
raise the issue of  
safer sex.  
I can have safer sex  
and a delighting  
sex life.  
I am allowed to have  
sex.  
I like sex.  
It is OK for me to like  
sex.  
It is OK for me to be  
afraid of  
contracting HIV.  
It is OK for me not to  
trust my partner.  
Trust takes a long  
time to develop.  
I can love myself and  
my partner.  
I can be sexually  
honest.  
It is not OK for me to  
assume that my  
partner will  
necessarily be  
sexually honest  
with me.  
I do not need to put  
myself at risk.  
It is OK for me to sexually assertive.  
To say: "I like this." "I don't like that." "I'm afraid  
that may be unsafe." "I don't feel  
comfortable doing that." "I really want to do  
this."  
Just because I was sexually abused does not  
mean I have to give my power over to my  
partner.  
I do not have to trust my partner more than I  
trust myself.  
My perceptions and intuitions are real and valid.
- I can say "no" at any time.  
I have a right to say "no".  
I can say "yes".  
I can say "Do you want to..."  
I can initiate sex.  
  
I can enjoy sex.  
I can desire sex.  
I can want sex.  
I am a beautiful,  
intelligent, warm  
and loving woman.  
I am worthy of a  
mutually loving and  
respectful sexual,  
emotional and  
spiritual relationship.  
Mixed heritage  
does not mean  
"less than".  
Darker is desirous.  
And I am beautiful.  
Egypt is in Africa.  
It is OK for me to  
make mistakes, but  
I do not have to  
make mistakes.  
I am valuable.  
I am well loved.  
I am clean and  
sober.  
I am willing to give  
of myself.  
I am open to  
receiving.  
I am worthy of  
receiving.  
  
I am worthy of love.  
I am lucky to be your friend.  
You are lucky to be my friend.  
Mutuality.  
My experience is real and valid.  
People don't always tell the truth.  
Who we want to be doesn't always match who  
we are.  
It is OK for me to be strong.  
It is OK for me to know what I want.  
I have the power to change things.



*ProSex SafeSex, 1992 by Pearl Saad. Photo by Mark McPhail.*

**ATM** first published this painting in Issue #6. We reprint it here surrounded by the affirmations that make up its border, which are too small to read in our reproduction.

# Interview

by Jim Frazin with  
contributions from  
Thyme Siegal

*As a public figure who is open about her bisexuality, her feminism, and her practice of witchcraft, Starhawk has a vision of the world which we hope will be interesting to you. She initially became known for her non-fiction books on pagan religion. Her first published novel, "The Fifth Sacred Thing," was released in 1993. It is reviewed on page 54 in this issue.*

*Starhawk lives in a group household in San Francisco and travels extensively to do book readings, conduct workshops, and lead rituals. Her remarkable speech at the National Conference Celebrating Bisexuality at the 1993 March on Washington will appear soon in Naomi Tucker's book on bisexual politics.*

## ATM —

Starhawk, I wonder if you could talk a bit about your vision of the healing power of sex.

**Starhawk** — There are very old spiritual traditions

**Goddess graphic by Felicity Artemis Flowers, a feminist theorist, artist and educator in the area of feminist spirituality. She currently teaches classes in Sonoma County, and can be reached at 707/869-1309.**

# An Interview with Starhawk

that are earth-based. The goddess traditions in particular of Europe and the Middle East were very rooted in an understanding of erotic energy as healing energy, as life force energy. If you read the ancient texts — I am thinking of some of the Sumerian texts [where the goddess] Inanna is celebrating the sacred marriage — there is a sense that the erotic pleasure that she experiences and creates makes everything grow and everything healthy.

She refers to her body as "my crescent barge of heaven," praising her own vulva, "my fertile fields well watered, my hillock fields so well watered." Her body itself becomes identified with the land.

The image of male sexuality that I like very much is the "king's loins," the god celebrating sacred marriage: "his mighty rising and [with] his mighty rising do the vines rise up and the fields rise up and the desert fills with green like a verdant garden." So, there's this sense about male sensuality which is not this piercing, thrusting, violent, penetrating power. It's a power that rises as the vegetation rises, that gives rise to all the different kinds of fertility, not necessarily [only] human fertility.

That is a very ancient understanding and it's one that is harder to practice in this day and age when we have so much of a charge around sexuality. Sexuality has become a power exchange, a "power over," or a very desacralized purely sexual pleasure, or it becomes, you know, "holy matrimony."

[In *The Fifth Sacred Thing* the people of the North] have been able to go on to a healthier kind of sexuality. [For them], as I said in my talk at the Bi Conference, pleasure itself



is seen as sacred, as a way of connecting with the larger forces around us, with the deeper forces within us. And so the possibilities of pleasure, however they take their form between human beings, are honored, are respected and are also not made such a big deal of.

**ATM** — This discussion reminds me that in your novel you had that one beautiful ritual sex passage. I thought it was very, very brave and extremely poignant. Brave because it could be easily subject to misinterpretation and poignant because I believe that our individual and collective sex lives could genuinely benefit from an acknowledgement of the sacredness of pleasure.

**Starhawk** — I guess, for me, the sense of eroticism that I wanted in the book is this idea that the erotic is meant to be a force for healing, and for nurturing and for growth and for pleasure and for its own sake. It is a good, not an evil.

**ATM** — You create some very powerful characters in the novel. Maya was deeply involved in the creation of North society. Tell us about her. Was she based on you?

**Starhawk** — Well, Maya started out as my projection of myself far into the future. But as she developed, her history is not the same as my history. She's more like myself if I had done a lot of the things that I considered doing but actually thought better of. Maya dropped out of high school in the '60s, went to the Haight-Ashbury and never did finish school.

**ATM** — What other kinds of things did she do that you only considered doing?

**Starhawk** — She split up with her boyfriend because he was an alcoholic and [was] running around with other women and just driving her nuts. They were going off into the mountains to have a week together to patch up their relationship and he goes into a bar and gets drunk. She takes her backpack out of the car and hitchhikes off into the mountains and leaves him.

Which is something that I did do earlier in my life. When I was driving with my boyfriend and a couple other friends to Vancouver, I got really furious with him for some reason over breakfast. I ran out, took my backpack out of the car and started hitchhiking. But the difference is that after about 50 miles I started to regret my decision and went back to find out that my friends were all following me. Maya doesn't [regret it]. She goes off and lives in the mountains all by herself. Which is something that I would have liked to do but never did.

**ATM** — It seems that in this day and age there is the pervading sense that things have been wounded. Is it your sense that the goddess religion can help heal these wounds?

**Starhawk** — I think that the goddess religion is the kind of understanding that we need, the kind of deep emotional connection we need with the earth that can move us to do what needs to be done to heal those wounds and to stop the wounding from continuing. You know, this may not be the only thing, but it is certainly one of the important factors.

This summer my husband and I and his daughters were up at Clayoquot Sound in British Columbia [where] there was a big blockade all summer around clear-cutting one of the largest stands of temperate rain forest that's left on earth. We took part in the blockade [and] did rituals at the camp. Something that one woman said really struck me. "You know, scientists know all the facts about global warming; they know exactly what happens when they cut down the rain forests. But you don't see the scientists out on the blockade line. You see the people who have a personal, spiritual connection with the earth." I think that is very true, not just at Clayoquot, but [in] a lot of the other movements.

**ATM** — How do you believe goddess religion can be healing in what is essentially a Christian, homophobic, anti-sacred-pleasure society?

**Starhawk** — Well, I think goddess religion poses some questions and sets up a dialogue around values that can be very healing to the larger society. It is that essential understanding that the sacred is immanent in the world, can be embodied in the living world itself, in human beings, plants, animals and all that which supports life — as opposed to [the idea that] the sacred is outside the world. That puts a different cast on all the decisions that we make as a society. From questions like: do we clear-cut the old growth forests or not, to questions about where our own personal authority over our lives begins and ends. Do I have the right as a woman to say, I am not going to bring this life to birth, if I get pregnant; do I have a

right as a human being to say that I am sick with a terminal illness and I choose to end my life?

The goddess religion says that the sacred is immanent and that we each carry a sacred authority and that not only do we have a right to make those decisions but we are charged with making them. Those places where we encounter those big questions of



Photo: Darlene Weide

life and death, are where we encounter ourself as goddess.

It is not that I think that everyone in the world has to become witches. But we do have to understand that the quality of the sacred, being inherent in the world, is what we need to rethink our whole relationship [with the earth], and what we think of as the earth's resources. We might better think of them as the living systems of the earth that

sustain all the earth's life.

**ATM** — Maybe we could take a minute to define some terms for our readers? Let's start with "goddess religion."

**Starhawk** — Goddess is the term I prefer for the understanding that the universe is a living being that all of us are a part of; that that living being has an all-pervading consciousness that exists in many different facets and many different dimensions. Within that are cycles of birth and growth and death and rebirth. If you are talking about a specific facet of that consciousness, there are many aspects of goddess and also of gods in our tradition, in the craft, in Wicca. [Goddess religion is] the spiritual tradition that prefers to acknowledge the sacred in that particular way, and the sense of community and rituals that we

create around that.

**ATM** — What does "pagan" mean?

**Starhawk** — Pagan is actually a word that comes from the same Latin word or root as the word that means countryside. It originally referred to the people who lived in the country and were the last to convert to Christianity. They held on to their old ways

longer. Now it basically means someone who practices an earth-based religion, generally referring to those of European descent who follow earth-based religion. Until recently, I never ran into any Latino or African people who referred to themselves as pagan because they still had the negative association. But now I know some who call themselves Latino pagans.

**ATM** — What does "witch" mean?

**Starhawk** — [Witch] comes from an anglo-saxon root, "wick," meaning to bend or shape. And witches were the healers, the ones who could bend or shape reality. They were like the *curanderas* today of Mexico whom people go to for healing or herbs or a reading; something to help you if life is not working out for you. They were the priestesses and priests of the goddess. So a witch is a person, someone who has a firm personal commitment to the goddess religion and somebody who is capable of leading or teaching. It usually refers to someone who has been initiated into the tradition.

**ATM** — You grew up Jewish. What propelled you out of Judaism?

**Starhawk** — At the time, there was nowhere in it to have a sense of power or responsibility. That might not be as true now as it was twenty years ago; no one had imagined such a thing as a woman rabbi. Women were pretty much relegated to teaching Hebrew School or Hadassah or baking things. And also I had very powerful spiritual experiences that didn't seem to fit. They seemed to take place in

nature or in the context of sexuality. And it is not that [those things] cannot be found in Judaism, but that in the Judaism that I was raised in and taught in the mid-'60s, no one was talking about [them]. So, when I encountered the goddess religion, it was "Yes!" this is what I have always believed. I just never knew that there were other people who believed it.

**ATM** — In preparing for this interview, I was rereading your speech from the Bi Conference and in it I noticed that you say, "... How do we stand firm on the shifting sands of our own sexual fluidity, how do we counter the vicious hatred that gets aroused when we say, 'I am gay not because I have to be, but because I choose to be. At least today I do and I have a right to make that choice.'"

This is a voice in the wilderness, especially in gay/lesbian politics. Actually there are two wildernesses, the other being the dominant culture.

**Starhawk** — First I should say, in my model of how things are, I think that there are some people who are truly gay and lesbian. They always knew they were. It's not something that changes for them. Just like there are some people, even in an unpressured world, who are exclusively heterosexual [and] would never be attracted to a person of the same sex. But probably the vast majority of people, if they weren't conditioned otherwise, would find that their sexuality does shift and change, that what we think of as sexual attraction and sexual orientation is actually much more complex and a lot more mysterious and maybe not necessarily just limited to factors of gender in the way that we have

been forced to [limit it].

It might not be fair to call it "wilderness" since wilderness is a good. But the dominant culture is so hostile to homosexuality, and I think that it is hostile on a level that is constantly shocking to those who live in a more tolerant climate like here in the Bay Area. We found

that out with the whole issue of gays in the military, I think that it was a shock to Clinton to see just how entrenched that fear and hostility is. And so, because of that, the lesbian and gay movement has been forced to jockey for political position by saying, "Hey this is something that is innate, a given, unchangeable." At the same time it almost throws us into the disability model of homosexuality. "We have to give these people equal rights because they can't help it."

**ATM** — A number of people are now saying that the race model or disability model is a trap for bisexuals and even for lesbians and gays.

**Starhawk** — In the past we have argued, "Of course we don't choose it. Because why would anyone choose this, the hatred, the vilification, the difficulties one has to endure?" And now it is very hard [for bisexuals] to stand up [to the general public as well as

lesbians and gays] and say, "Well people, there are those of us out here who do choose it some of the time. [We] have a sexuality that is not bound in the same way as a lot of other people's." The argument that we must make is that pleasure is sacred; we are not arguing from Old Testament morality or from New Testament

morality or somebody else's book of morality. But we are arguing from the position that the sacred is in the body and therefore my body carries within it its own sacred authority to determine what pleasure it can take [consensually] and what pleasure it can give.

**ATM** — There are so many horror stories in the bi community told by people who have come out two or even three times as their sexuality has shifted.

**Starhawk** — We do have an absolute right to make that choice. I think that is probably a much harder and longer political battle than getting people to say, "OK, they can't help it, we'll tolerate it." But in the long run, that is the struggle we need to think about and we need to win because I do believe that [sexual fluidity is] the reality for most people.



Photo: Jim Frazin

# Talking Cure or Walking Cure?

By Tori Woodard

We are all at the mercy of the medical theories of our particular society and era. Some cultures advocate driving out evil spirits or placating gods to cure illnesses. In Chinese medicine, doctors stick needles into the patient. In Western society, the prevailing medical paradigm is surgery and pharmaceuticals (what I call "cut and drug"), and anything that can't be cured that way is considered to be psychosomatic, meaning "you're not really sick."

Since "cut and drug" always seemed crude and barbaric to me, I was naturally drawn to psychological explanations for health problems. I even went so far as to study psychotherapy. But my experience with a chronic illness taught me another paradigm. It's perhaps the simplest medical theory of all: I am an organism whose health responds to my environment. The "cure" consists of providing my body with clean air, clean water, and clean food. The medical establishment denies and lobbies against this theory because there's no money in it for them, and because they are allied with the highly profitable chemical/drug industry.

I often wonder how many people who suffer from headaches, depression, exhaustion, irritability, loss of sexual energy, and dyslexia are, like me, reacting to the myriad of chemicals and allergens in our air, water, and food.

Here's my story ...

Over the years many women in my Berkeley feminist

subculture had developed either environmental illness (EI) or chronic fatigue. I can't say I was surprised when I developed EI. I was already sensitive to tobacco smoke and diesel exhaust, and expected to slowly become sensitive to other things. Instead, I was literally hiking one day and unable to get out of bed the next.

Of course, like most people with EI, at first I had no idea what was causing my symptoms. Doctors said my dizziness and weakness were caused by an ear infection. I'm lucky — it only took me a year and a half to figure it out. The 1990 National Bisexual Conference was the catalyst to my understanding, because their pre-conference materials gave a detailed list of commonly-used products that can be harmful to someone with EI. Having the list and meeting people at the conference who had EI prompted me to consider the idea that chemicals were causing my symptoms.

Four months after the conference I knew what I had, and I wasted no more time. I started seeing a doctor with expertise in EI and moved to the Mojave Desert to get away from smog and mold. I was lucky again — that I could support myself at home as a writer. Many people are trapped in polluted environments by work or family obligations.

I had refused to live in the country for many years, because that's where I grew up. I was afraid I would be lonely in a rural community, as I had been as a child. But my desert experience cured my loneliness

as well as my physical symptoms. I spent days on end by myself. I took long hikes to build up my strength. And to keep myself company I started meditating. In that way I discovered an inner source of love and transcendence.

After two years of clean air, clean water, and exercise, my health had improved enough that I could move north again to be closer to my friends. I now live just beyond the San Francisco Bay Area smog and fog belt, in a relatively hot and dry climate. I filter the air in my house and my car, and I feel good about half the time.

I'm now one of those people I used to see in the health food store wearing a cotton mask. I wear my mask whenever I go outside, as well as indoors if someone in the room is wearing cologne or clothes that were washed in commercial laundry products or dried with a fabric softener. The mask creates a barrier that makes me feel isolated from my friends, and makes strangers stare at me with horror or curiosity, or try to avoid eye contact altogether. Most of the people I know who have EI don't wear their masks in public because they don't like being treated like a pariah. I decided it's better to both protect my health and educate people by wearing my mask.

My social life has suffered the most. I avoid parties and public events because of fragrances and residual laundry odors in people's clothes. I can't support myself with any job that involves public contact, work around office equipment or chemicals, or commuting. I am more

fortunate than some with EI, because if I manage to avoid exposure to chemicals and mold, I'm strong enough to work as a writer and editor in the filtered environment of my home, take care of my garden, and go on hikes. I'm able to visit friends or go to meetings in the city occasionally, but I suffer if I overdo it.

Sometimes I rail against the universe about my restricted lifestyle. But then I remember the unexpected gifts that my illness brought me: inner strength, more contact with the natural world, and closer relationships with my lover and my parents. The three of them responded to my illness with an outpouring of love. They schlepped me to and from the desert, visited me regularly there, and showed me how much they love me in every way they knew.

Another gift of my healing is that the emotional problems I used to have responded to the "cure" as well. While I was studying to be a therapist, I started seeing a therapist myself. The areas where I focused most were depression, my relationship with my lover, and my sexual orientation.

Now I believe environmental factors caused 90% of my emotional problems. I feel pretty stable now — in my mood, my relationship, and my bisexual orientation. But exposure to environmental irritants can upset my equilibrium.

Mold, for instance, can make me severely depressed within an hour. This summer I started to enjoy a picnic lunch in a grassy park, but by the time we left I felt so sorry for myself that I was on the verge of tears. As soon as we drove away, my good humor returned and I realized that I had been

reacting to mold in the grass.

Then I remembered that for years I avoided picnics because they made me depressed. In therapy and on my own, I had racked my brains for a psychological explanation for depression associated with holidays and picnics. I recalled feeling jealous when I was young that men and boys at family outings got to play horseshoes while women and girls set out food and cleaned up afterwards. But mostly all I remembered was looking forward to and enjoying picnics.

Now my only problem with picnics is finding an environ-

months I spent every therapy session trying to sort out what to do about loving someone I wasn't attracted to, affirming that I deserved to feel sexual, and wondering if I would be happier with a woman.

After leaving him I discovered I wasn't attracted to anyone else for long either. Love won out, and we've been back together for years.

Looking back on my therapy, my only regret is that I didn't know about the physical causes of my symptoms. How much more time I could have spent on my dreams—exploring my unconscious and its link to the collective consciousness — if I hadn't been mired in depression. How much more joyfully I could have approached the questions of love, relationships, and sexual orientation if my very life core — my sexual desire — hadn't been so muted by allergies.

Now if I sense pity from someone who sees me in my mask, I think to myself, "Ha! If they could see me hiking 10 miles through oak

savannahs every Saturday, mask-free, joyfully identifying the wildflowers and the birds, they'd be shocked and jealous." That's how I made peace with my illness — by taking the walking cure.

**Tori Woodard is a mostly European-American, anarcho-socialist, secular pagan, bisexual feminist.**

**Bob Thawley is an artist and collectivist living in San Francisco.**



Bob Thawley

mentally safe place to have them. That can be hard, but I prefer looking for external solutions like that to searching fruitlessly for internal solutions to psychological symptoms.

Exposure to mold and chemicals makes me really tired and dampens my sexual energy. I wish I had known that years ago, when I left my lover because I didn't feel sexually attracted to him. For

I didn't really know what to expect when I agreed to do an afternoon talk show. Whenever I watch those shows with queer subject matter, I get pissed off at the closed-minded individuals in the studio audience who inevitably ask dumb questions. So I thought this would be my big chance to say all those wonderful quippy comebacks that I have been bursting to say times I have sat at home in front of my TV.

Next thing I know, I find myself on a plane strapped into my seat ready for take off for Chicago with my travel and show companions Lani Kaahumanu and her youngest spawn, Danielle Raymond. During the flight I prioritized my sound bytes for the Bertice Berry Show, "Bisexual Youth" that I would be taping the next morning.

Did I want to start off with the high suicide rate for queer youth or how the God/Goddess is a prime example of bifriendliness because of his/her ability to love us all equally despite our gender? As I ponder the possibilities, the reality of coming out to millions of people slowly begins to creep in. Fear covers me like fog over the San Francisco Bay. As soon as we land we head for our baggage, greeted by a fellow from the show, holding a sign reading "Raymond." We wonder why my last name, "Flamer" wasn't his first choice.

I calm down once inside the stretch limo and begin to enjoy my new found VIP status. The bar is to my left, the TV to my right, and I'm in couch potato heaven.

We settle into our rooms after checking in, without complimentary glasses of

## Bi Kind of Town, Chicago Is...

by Terry Flamer ►►►

champagne. My room is so groovy, I almost forget why I'm there. After a gourmet dinner and a stiff one, I hit the sheets.

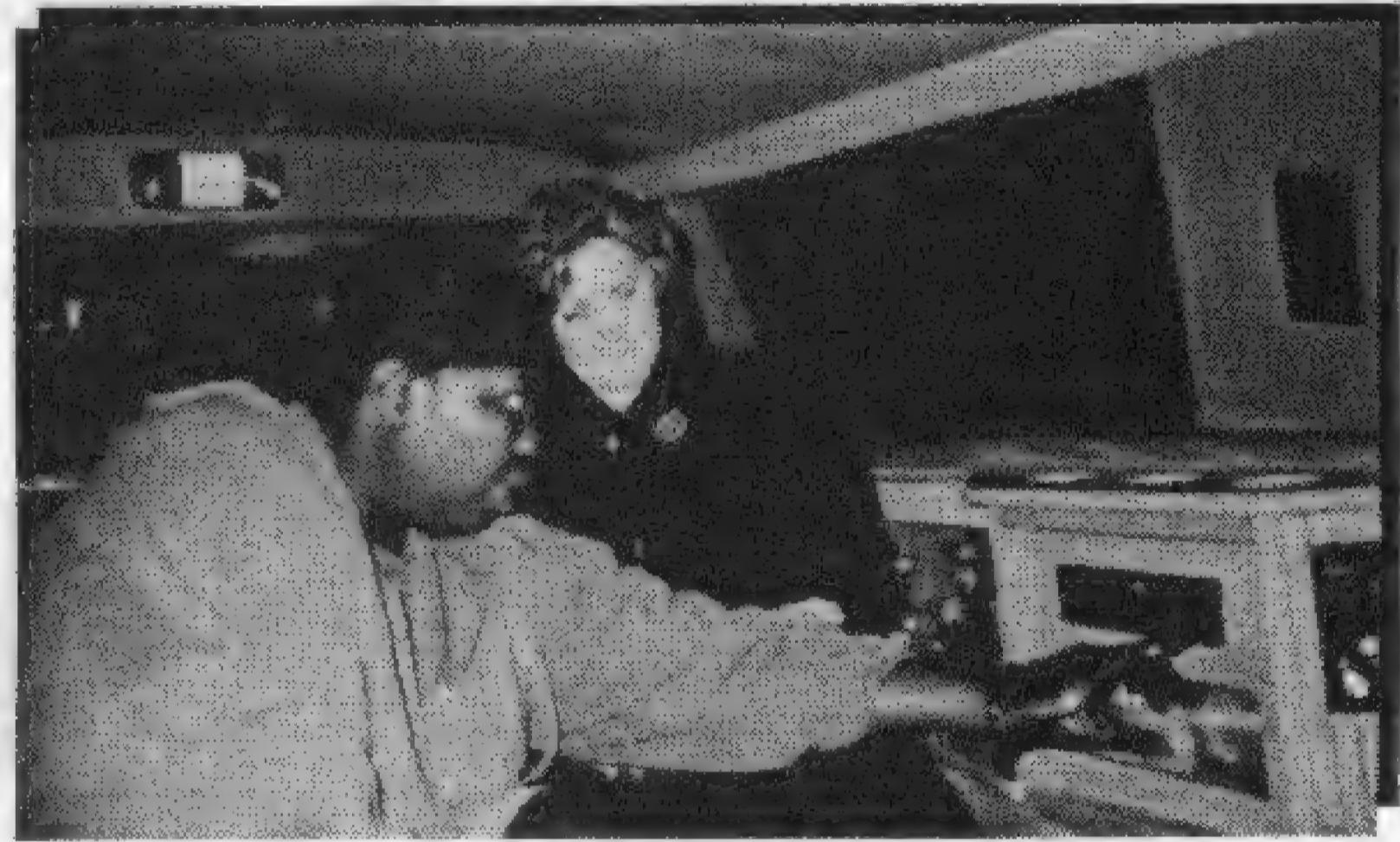
Everything was going great until about 4 a.m. when the fear returned and awakened me. Worst-case scenarios flooded my brain, like having the audience from hell, or them flying my mom up as a surprise guest, or my getting the hiccups as soon as someone asked me a question. Somewhere around 5:30 a.m. I fell asleep again.

The limo picked us up at the hotel at 8:30 a.m. The taping began at 11 a.m. At this point, my fear was replaced with excitement. After my time with the make-up artist I went to the bathroom to make sure I didn't look too goofy. While in there I met three women from the "audience." They had gotten wind

of the show topic and were preparing for battle. They had no idea I was on the panel. I had to stifle a giggle when they began to hope out loud that their TV exposure would help land them a husband. As they began to exit the restroom one woman ran into me. She held my arms and quickly apologized with an, "I'm sorry, baby!" and a smile. When I got on stage during the third segment I made sure to make direct eye contact with them, watching their eyes pop and jaws drop. Immediately, these women bounced in their seats

anxious to level their religiously-biased judgments on me. I could only smile.

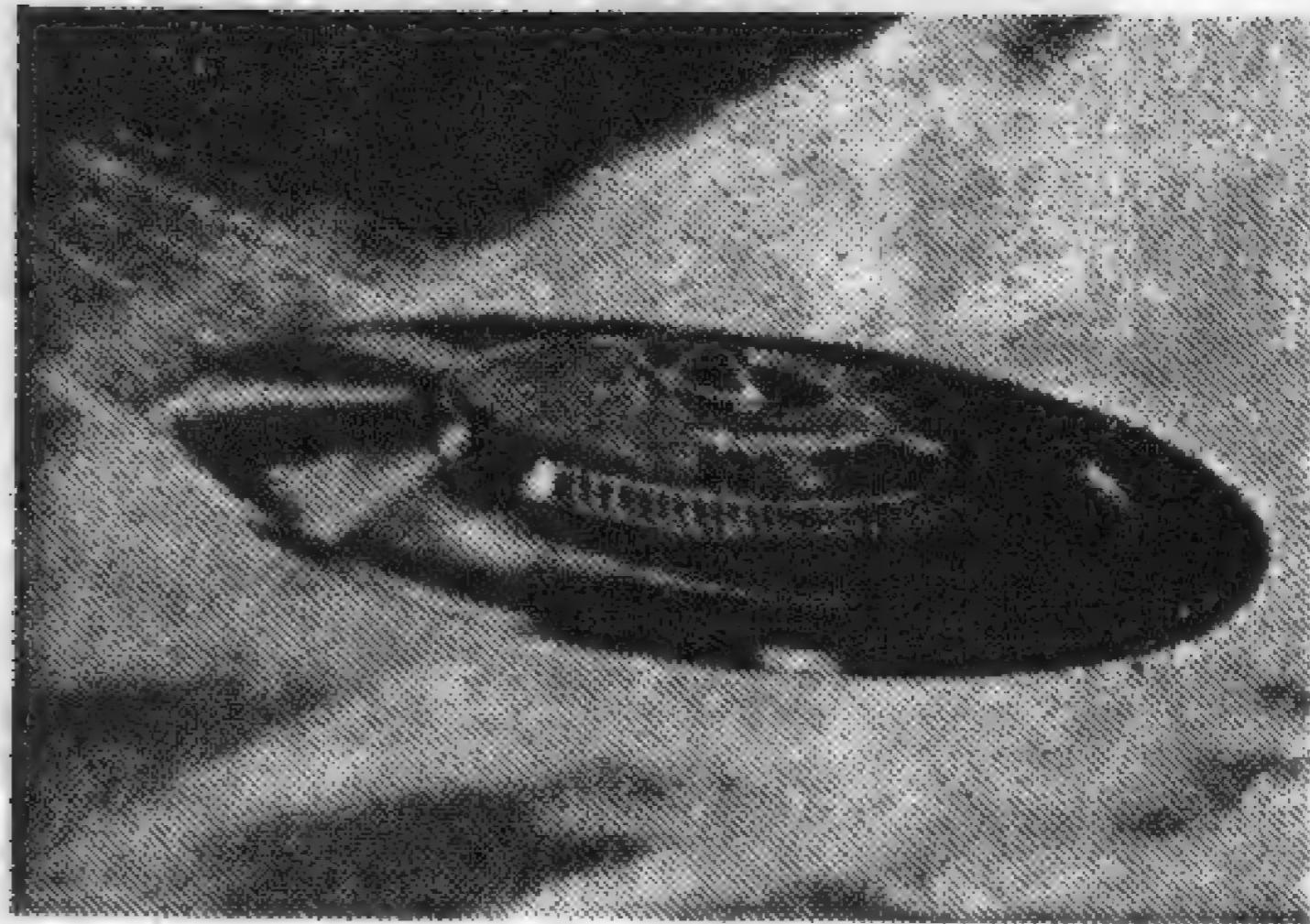
My heart was beating so loud I was afraid the mic would pick it up. Bertice asked me how my mother discovered I was queer. Before I knew it, the story was nervously tumbling from my mouth and to my surprise garnering appalled gasps from the audience. By the first commercial break, the shaking began to subside and I was searching my mind for the perfect thing to say. I wanted to be inclusive of everything I



Terry Flamer and Danielle Raymond check out the limo en route to the Beatrice Berry Show. Photo courtesy Terry Flamer.

had written down and left in the green room. My mind continued to search for that highly profound pearl of information, while I endured some guy asking, "Why not just date a guy who likes to dress like a girl?" and one of the "bathroom 3" telling me that she's glad my mother is praying for me and that she will be praying for me also.

And just as I knew what I wanted to say, I heard the theme music welling up and the host was shaking my hand. Maybe I'll get my chance next time...



## Extraterrestrial

by Ted Morgan

The cafe light is swinging softly,  
a black coffee cup rests  
in my hands, but I do not look at it, nor at the street,  
nor at the titanium clouds in the shapes of Olympians,  
but instead at the fluorescent green ball floating just in front  
of my table, as high as a seven-year-old's chest.

Someone is singing the *Ava Maria* down the street and  
the ball splits open and begins to bleed  
blue. The cafe light swings above me,  
but nothing appears from inside the now-wide sphere,  
except a voice in my head saying,  
“A circle is the only thing in nature that we know.”

So when I order another cup and a child comes  
down the street bouncing a ball, I know it is a secret;  
it is sunset and the glowing sphere drops from view.  
The stars are perfectly separated tonight,  
they tell their stories of the past  
like a shaking grandmother, her hands wide.

My friend, Mary, joins me and as usual she talks of UFOs  
out there in the void with us. I sometimes imagine that she is full  
of angel's wings, that she is an apparition or legend,  
but she is Mary, shaved head and lips that kiss a woman.  
“Hush,” I say, “they're already here.” Near us, a child forces his way  
into the gutter sewer, grabs his ball, and is gone.

*Ted Morgan studied poetry at the University of Maryland. He has published previous poems in college and high school literary magazines.*

# Spiritual Abuse

by Teresa Ann Pearcey

I saw my sister last weekend. I returned home feeling a severe ache in my gut for the price she still pays for having been abused. She has found her salvation in the numbness of the drugs her boyfriend keeps her supplied with. It's a familiar scenario to me. I spent several years shacked up with my drug dealer too. Of course, I didn't have children. But she does have children. What price will my niece and nephew pay when they are older, in addition to the price they pay now? Probably years in some group therapy session or twelve step meeting for ACOA's (Adult Children of Alcoholics). Do you think each successive generation should charge the one that preceded it for all the therapy, or simply sue for pain and suffering?

Is incest nothing more than physical abuse? How could it be? My father only fondled my sister's breasts and kissed them in the privacy of our mother's bedroom. A few pats on the butt. How harmful could that be? I find the answer to that question in my sister's eyes every time I look into them. It doesn't matter if she smiles while she suckles her baby or laughs with her party buds. What my father did lives in her eyes and has since the day he did it over fifteen years ago. I call that spiritual abuse. It is what it felt like then and what it feels like now.

In the pursuit of some relief from the incest I suffered at my father's hands so many years ago, I attended a twelve step meeting for survivors of

incest last year on a regular basis. This after seven years of therapy and/or twelve step meetings for incest and alcoholism and drug addiction. The meeting specified "nothing too heavy to share." That's code for "ritual abuse survivors welcome here." In the course of sharing and listening in these meetings I came to the conclusion that I am also a ritual abuse survivor.

I didn't have Satanic cult members for parents. Just Christians. In the name of God, I was kept out of the public school system for eighteen years because sex education was supposedly a

communist plot to overthrow the United States. I was told it was a sin to question my father's physical abuse of my mother and sexual abuse of my sister and me because "a husband is to his wife and children as Christ is to the Church."

A lot of people don't know that *any* religion or belief system can be used for the purposes of ritual abuse.

Ritual abuse can be likened to the way Hitler ran Germany or the way the Christians conducted "Holy Wars." However, it is usually called ritual abuse when it occurs on a smaller scale. Everyone believes ritual abuse is about human and animal sacrifices and worshiping the devil, but it doesn't matter if Abraham is cutting his son Isaac in Yahweh's name or if some Satanic cult is draining the blood from the neighbor's cat for Satan. It is very much the same concept because abuse is justified and perpetuated by the belief system.

I believe there are two kinds of ritual abuse. First, there is the kind of ritual abuse being sensationalized by the media currently and more obscure things like the abuse I suffered as a child. Then there is the kind of ritual abuse the dominant culture sanctions and even glorifies. The way my parents raised my sister and me is considered strange and cruel by most people, even if Christianity was used to justify it, but there are many abuses that are commonly accepted in this society. I believe all these different kinds of abuse are



Teresa Ann Pearcey is a married (to a man) bisexual, feminist sex worker, writer, and public speaker who is recovering from alcoholism, addiction, domestic violence, rape, incest and this patriarchal society's relentless assault on vulnerability and cooperation. She loves weight training, reading books about Native American spirituality, and befriending cats.

Photo: Darlene Weide

only different in how much they are accepted by large groups of people (called societal norms). It's kind of like the difference between female genital mutilation and circumcision: none.

Am I going too fast for you?

O.K., let me summarize. I believe there is really only one kind of abuse and that is *spiritual abuse*. There are different kinds of spiritual abuse to be sure. Spiritual abuse includes incest, ritual abuse (abuse based upon a religious and/or some other belief system), rape, female genital mutilation and circumcision, and war. I would enlarge this list to include just about everything this society has to offer, because the entire patriarchal system is set up to destroy the inherent beauty of the human soul or spirit.

The pervasive and insidious abuse begins when we are born but the most thorough and systematic attack on the human spirit begins at school age. Then the educational process does its best to blot out what little independence of thought and spontaneity of spirit might still remain. One of my favorite authors in the field of Psychology is Alice Miller. In *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child*, she coins the word "poisonous pedagogy" which she uses to describe "that tradition of child-rearing which attempts to suppress all vitality, creativity, and feeling in the child and maintain the autocratic, godlike position of the parents at all cost." She goes on to say "Our whole system of raising and educating children provides the power-hungry with a ready-made railway network they can use to reach the destination of their choice. They need only push the

buttons that parents and educators have already installed."

Miller explores the origin of this in religious belief: "The Bible speaks of God's Omnipotence, but the Divine deeds it describes contradict this attribute: for someone who



Teresa and her sister. Photo courtesy of Teresa Ann Pearcey.

possessed omnipotence would not need to demand obedience from his child, would not feel his security threatened by false gods, and would not persecute his people for having them. Perhaps the theologians are not in a position to create an ideal image of true goodness and omnipotence differing from the character of their real fathers ... And so they create an image of God based on the model they are already familiar with. Their God is like their father: insecure, authoritarian, power-hungry, vengeful, egocentric."

Miller believes that popular morality and child-rearing has the opposite effect intended. Instead of resulting in loving, altruistic citizens, "The hatred rooted in the small child's reaction to this training swells to immense proportions, and the Church (in part unconsciously) abets the proliferation of evil, which, on a

conscious level, it professes to oppose."

Equating spiritual abuse with ritual abuse and that with "devil worship" keeps the truth about abuse hidden and allows it to continue. People can abhor and be shocked by others without ever having to face the horrible truth about themselves. Which brings me to the question of circumcision.

I grew up with circumcised penises. I always thought it was the most natural thing in the world. The first time I saw an intact penis with a foreskin, I was slightly frightened and very turned off. But my husband and I were at the National Sexuality Symposium last year and happened upon the booth for the National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers (NOCIRC). They were playing a videotape of an actual circumcision on a newborn infant. I was horrified. As this little baby boy lay strapped to the table so he couldn't move and the doctor proceeded to cut off his foreskin without the benefit of anesthesia, the baby boy cried and screamed until his voice gave out and he literally passed out! I cried too. And although I have since read a lot about circumcision and female genital mutilation, I knew how I felt about circumcision the minute I saw the video. I was so grateful my sister did NOT have my nephew circumcised.

Let me share some of what I have learned from the informational brochures put out by NOCIRC: "Throughout history, people around the world have practiced circumcision. For some, as with Jews and Moslems, it has been a religious ritual; for others, as in Australia and Africa, it has been a puberty rite ... Circum-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

cision began in the English-speaking countries during the mid-1800's supposedly to prevent masturbation which was believed to cause many diseases. Since that time, various rationale have perpetuated its practice, but all of these, including claims that circumcision prevents penile and cervical cancers and the spread of venereal disease, have been disproven. To remove the foreskin for hygiene is no more logical than pulling teeth instead of cleaning them ... Until recently, it was believed babies felt no pain due to their immature nervous systems. Studies, however, indicate that babies experience physical and psychological stress both during the circumcision and for hours afterward. The procedure is undeniably painful. Some babies cease to cry or lapse into a deep sleep which is how they are able to cope with the traumatic experience. Circumcision is a surgical procedure with inherent risks which include hemorrhage, infection, mutilation, and possible death. Serious complications occur with one in every 500 circumcisions." [from *Circumcision, Why?* printed by NOCIRC in 1991].

In 1990 the Inter-African Committee voted to call female 'circumcision' what it is: female genital mutilation. It is time that male circumcision be called by its proper name: male genital mutilation. Could this initial introduction to violence, pain and betrayal (genital mutilation) account for the disproportionate number of males as opposed to females who occupy our penal system in the United States?

Religion and government, which were one and the same not so long ago and are still connected today seem to be at

the root of so many things I definitely consider abuse. Circumcision is one. Penitentiaries are another. Penitentiaries make wonderful schools for criminal practice, I hear. But they do nothing to solve the root problems that cause crime in the first place. And as Alice Miller said, churches and governments and their educational processes seem to be directly responsible for much of the crime in this world because of the spiritual abuse

It is time that male circumcision be called by its proper name: male genital mutilation.

they inflict on children. Only fitting then that their answer to crime would be more abuse, I suppose.

Now I know some of you are going to be very disappointed if I don't approach this idea of "cults" as spiritual abuse. So I will turn to my dictionary: **"cult: 1. A community or system of religious worship and ritual. 2.a. A religion or religious sect generally regarded as bogus or extremist. b. followers of such a religion or sect. 3.a. Obsessive devotion to a person, principle, or ideal. b. The object of such devotion. 4. An exclusive group or persons sharing an esoteric interest."** I find it very interesting that definition 1. is easily applied to all existing religions.

Whichever definition you prefer, the dictionary certainly doesn't mention the name of the deity worshipped (whether it's God, Buddha, Satan or Jim Jones) or the rituals practiced (whether it's communion, circumcision, animal sacrifice or mass suicide). It seems very

obvious to me that the word "cult" could refer to any religion, and whether it was "regarded as bogus or extremist" would depend entirely on who was doing the regarding. I find all religions bogus.

So often religion and spirituality are confused for the same thing. Religion is about believing and worshiping, while spiritual practice requires action, change and growth on the part of the person who practices a spiritual life. I prefer spirituality. For me, religion is the antithesis of spirituality. Religion demands that its adherents look outside of themselves rather than looking inward.

Religion encourages people to remain in the patriarchal mode: in fearful subservience to an authority figure. I think religion actually separates humans from spirit. I consider that the worst spiritual abuse of all.

To heal from spiritual abuse in all its various forms, this world needs to be reunited with its spirit by first telling the truth about the dysfunction and damage perpetrated by the prevailing system(s) and then reclaiming our uniqueness, spontaneity, creativity, independence, freedom and rights. Rights that we all deserve include boundaries to keep us from being sexually used, physically hurt, mutilated, or emotionally scarred. To heal, we all have to be courageous enough to question what we have been taught. We have to be able to withstand peer pressure and punishment from those who are too afraid of their own rage and hurt to look at spiritual abuse as anything other than the "way it's always been" or the "way it's supposed to be".

## When I Was Six

by Teresa Ann Pearcey

And then she cried  
about the broad white sheet  
draped upon the kitchen table  
like the awful form  
of some medieval tent  
and the sun  
was a naked 100 watt light bulb  
exposing  
what she had mistaken  
as innocence  
something to guard and grieve  
in the final moment  
when tender flesh  
was stripped and  
laid bare  
for all to see  
like a caged specimen  
mounted on his wall  
of glory  
to his lions  
year after year after year  
amidst her tears.

Teresa Ann Pearcey's bio appears on  
page 32

## MIDNIGHT FOR YOU

by Chocolate Waters

I throw off the covers sweating,  
make eyes at the darkness,  
try to figure out where I am.  
I feel your lips against me,  
as if you're in the room.  
I'm always trying to kiss you.  
You're always running away.  
Tonight you kiss me back,  
a hot, sweet plaintive kiss,  
then run into the hallway crying.  
I fold my arms around you.  
You beat your fists against me.  
I want to know who hurt you,  
why you can not love me.  
I bolt straight up,  
bark at the darkness.  
Your kiss is dripping down my face,  
slipping into midnight.

*Chocolate Waters' first three collections of short stories, poems and vignettes sold 10,000 copies. She has received several writing awards and performed as a "Stand-Up Poet" throughout the U.S. and Canada. Write to 415 W. 44th St. #7, New York, NY 10036 to order her books.*

## Nervosa

by Richard Ballon

There's one place  
I cannot touch,  
and it's your waistline  
that was branded  
by your father's hand  
when he thought  
you were too young to know.

*Richard Ballon wrote and directed One Good Look and In the Name of God, which played to sold out houses at the University of Massachusetts. The Hidden Word in My Vocabulary premiered last summer at the East Street Studio's "Poetry in Motion" festival.*

## Mold Me and Make Me

he went to church  
every Sunday at Cornerstone Baptist  
school all week  
at Bell High

had a job  
as a janitor for Riley's Printing

a steady girlfriend

was a good kid  
everybody said

but  
never good  
enough for her

she had to tell him  
when to come

where to go

who to be friends  
with and who  
to stay away from

what to wear

when to shave

and shower

how to comb  
his hair

after she cut it

told him what  
to eat

when to eat

where to eat

wouldn't let him open  
a savings account  
without her  
along

now she moans  
and sobs

wonders how he could  
possibly have  
had a

nervous breakdown  
without her

## Two Poems by Sheryl L. Nelms

### Don't Fuck With Me

I have an attitude  
Baptists probably  
won't like

I spit fuck  
at each  
jolt

don't see  
circling gulls  
daffodils  
grape hyacinths

furry fields of green  
winter wheat

don't smell the  
fresh baked  
cinnamon rolls

seldom smile at babies

all is lost  
in the halitosed haze

of your alcoholic  
binges

Sheryl L. Nelms hails from Kansas and presently resides in Texas. She has published over 2,700 poems in literary and commercial magazines. She has written four books of poetry and a chapbook, is a teacher of writing workshops and a member of several professional writer's organizations. She has three children in college, and is a photographer, a weaver, a painter, and an old dirt biker.

## What Was It Then, Memory?

by Roger Weaver

Remember the taste of your first Chiclet?  
Maybe you were in the third grade.  
I sat near a kid who masturbated  
under his desk every day  
and thought nobody knew.

What is childhood innocence?  
Does it include the kids  
who pick their scabs and eat them,  
or who fear being small in all ways,  
before children learn that small  
matches set good fires?

Next to these, set memories  
of family cruelty or neglect,  
then ask yourself: would you live  
your childhood over if you could?

Roger Weaver lives in Corvallis,  
Oregon, and teaches poetry  
writing at Oregon State  
University. He has published  
three volumes of poetry, and  
his handbook for poets  
*Standing on Earth, Throwing*  
*These Sequins at the Stars*, will  
be available from Gardyloo  
Press in January, 1994.

## The Religious Atheist by Rane Arroyo

A Bloody Mary at midnight,  
my burning mouth. You stand naked  
under the evening star. I think  
of what prayer used to taste like  
on my tongue. Neighbors' stereos  
throb on our ceilings and floors.

Something in me is old tonight  
Needs attendance. You wish to be  
captured by something, someone.  
I fail you. I've tested my fist  
before. I will fight to my death,  
as if it will do you or me any good.  
Look. I can't even haunt myself,

tonight,  
tonight,  
tonight.

Rane Arroyo was the 1991 winner of the Hart Crane Memorial  
Poetry Award. He teaches General Writing and American  
Literature at the University of Pittsburgh.

# Sukkot: The Season of Our Joy

by Jim Frazin

In observing the Jewish harvest festival of Sukkot, we learn that the verse "One who sows in tears reaps in joy" is true. This past year, in addition to the traditional observance with its sensual symbolism, bisexuals reflected on the harvest of our efforts in attaining greater peace and cooperation with the lesbian/gay community, and celebrated the giant steps towards peace and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians and other Arab countries.

Sukkot officially begins two weeks after Rosh Hashana (the Jewish new year) on the same day of the week and lasts 9 days (eight in Israel).

As with many of the Jewish holidays, Sukkot has dual origins — being both a historical and an agricultural festival. Agriculturally, the holiday celebrates the final gathering of fruit and produce for the year. Historically, it represents the people of Israel's journey through the desert after their exodus from Egypt — during which the people lived in booths (*sukkahs*) of an obviously impermanent nature. In commemoration, today some Jews build *sukkahs* outdoors and sleep in them during the holiday.

Sukkot is referred to as *Zeman Simhatenu* — Hebrew for the Season of Our Joy (unlike the more solemn holidays of Passover, celebrating the exodus from Egypt, and Shavuot, the receiving of the Ten Com-

mandments at Mt. Sinai). During this season of our joy, forgiveness is seen as a two-way interaction. One not only asks for forgiveness but offers it as well. As such, the essence of Sukkot is to reap the joy grown in the tears and introspection of the high holidays of *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*.

Love of and participation in community is one of the defining features of Jewishness. Consistent with the *Yom Kippur* notion of forgiveness is the idea that we as a bisexual community and as individuals can offer forgiveness to the gay, lesbian, and heterosexual communities for their transgressions (real or perceived — not recognizing us, discounting us, rendering us invisible, stereotyping us, etc.). Forgiving others means we let go of our victim status. Commensurately we, as bisexuals, in community and individually, can ask for forgiveness from those against whom we have transgressed, for in all likelihood we have treated others in the same way.

Sukkot is, at the same time, the season of the harvest. On this full moon in the Jewish month of Tishri (September/October), we can experience fulfillment of the year's efforts. This is a harvest of joy and *shalom* (peace). Lesbian, gay, trans-

and bisexual people can come together and rejoice in our accomplishments. (I know, many of you are thinking that there is so much to be done — yet you cannot deny that we bisexuals have accomplished much. So, get over it!)

The astrological symbol for the harvest time of the year is the balance of Libra. The connections between the scales of justice, Libra's balance, the fulfillment of the harvest of crops and the harvest of introspection and forgiveness are not accidental. As bisexuals, we hold out to the world that we all can experience the balance of loving at all points in the circle of gender. This is true even if we, each of us, don't individually experience that sexually.

This past harvest period was especially memorable because Israel and the Palestinians agreed to try to fully live in peace after being at war for nearly a generation. Two Semitic peoples whose origins are so intertwined and whose individual struggles have dispersed them to the far corners of the world can now think hopefully about assembling in their homelands as sisters and brothers, neighbors and partners, friends and co-workers.

Associated with this holiday are certain mitzvot (lesser commandments). One is *Ushpizin* — Hospitality; everyone is invited—Jew and non-Jew, man and woman, lesbian, transgender and bisexual — and it is symbolic of peace and unity.



throughout the world.

Another mitzvah is *Arbaah Minim* — where ritually we use the Four Species which represent the four-letter name of God. Within this there is a sensual female-nine-masculine symbolism. The Four Species are *etrog*, which is a citron, a grapefruit-like fruit that is a female symbol; a *lulav* or palm branch which is a male symbol; myrtle which is symbolic of the eyes and enlightenment; and the willow branch, symbolic of the lips and speaking or prayer.

Sukkah-building is another mitzvah. The booth normally has walls and a few branches for a roof. The floor plan may be arranged in the shape of a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The walls are usually highly decorated with fall fruits and vegetables. Thus the sukkah is both a reminder of the time when Jews were journeying through the desert, and a celebration of the bountiful harvests that are now possible.

At the 1993 Sukkot party, we built the sukkah inside for convenience. Brightly-colored cloth served as the decorations, along with origami that party-goers made and hung on the walls. We pasted glow-in-the-dark stars, moons, and planets on dark cardboard, creating a "night sky" to better enable us to feel the impermanence of the shelter.

#### References:

*The First Jewish Catalog* by Siegal, Starssels and Strassfeld

*The Seasons of Our Joy* by Arthur Waskow

Thanks also to Elissa Chandler.

# THE ENEMY IS IN MY HOUSE

## Part II: Spirituality

by Naomi Tucker

*The following is the second in a series of articles on domestic violence, a topic which ATM has committed to explore as a service to our community. The first article, appearing in the sexuality issue (#5) of ATM, portrayed the exploitation of passion in abusive relationships, the devastating impact of sexual abuse, and the aspects of one's sexual self and identity that are affected by experiences of abuse. In this issue we examine another aspect of abusive relationships: the ways in which they can use, manipulate, and deeply wound one's spiritual self.*

Spirituality is a complex term with many interpretations. I have learned from years of listening to women from many cultures, religions, and spiritual beliefs that spirituality can be a significant factor in how we experience abuse in relationships.

Partner abuse can radically alter a survivor's relationship to spirituality. For some, the injustice of abuse is enough to turn them away from believing in a god/creator/higher power. Others find their faith strengthened as a result of their miraculous survival.

In the context of abusive relationships, I think of "spiritual abuse" in three dimensions. The first uses religious beliefs to justify abuse. The second involves denying some-

one access to their spiritual community or support system. The third is the inevitable loss of one's spiritual self that comes with continued degradation and violence.

### Using religion to justify abuse

Religious communities can be insular and isolating. Stories of ritual/cult abuse survivors are extreme cases where religious beliefs are used to justify violence, but more subtle examples can be found in many religious institutions. Jewish texts, for instance, dictate that a man must treat his wife with respect unless she violates Jewish law, in which case he is allowed to beat her. The Christian Right justifies corporal punishment of children. Many religions teach women it is their duty to "serve" their husbands. Some religions also teach women to keep the family together at all costs — including their own suffering. Such beliefs sanctify the rape and indentured servant status of married women. A woman who dares to transgress from the norms of her religious community feels tremendous shame.

In my work in the Jewish community, I hear this story from women of all sexual orientations: "I went to my rabbi for help. S/he told me to

## THE ENEMY

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go home and 'patch things up.' No one believed I was being abused." Such pervasive denial on the part of religious leaders not only perpetuates the problem, but also confirms the survivor's belief that the abuse is her fault, or that she deserves it.

### Isolation

Abusers may go to great lengths to prevent their partners from receiving community support. Abuse in a relationship, whether physical, sexual, or emotional, is about power and control. It is about one person systematically controlling another. Community support threatens the totality of a batterer's control. Therefore, abusers sabotage their partners' relationships to people, places, and situations that might offer strength or support.

Battered women experience isolation, powerlessness, and mind control in the same way as members of religious cults. Abusers and cult leaders alike control their "victims" by ensuring that they do not have the resources, strength, or self-esteem to leave the situation. The promise of food, clothing, shelter, love, or spiritual fulfillment makes the abusive situation less terrifying than an uncertain, outside world.

And so I hear many stories like these:

- A Catholic woman has been attending the same church for 15 years. Friends in the church become concerned about her boyfriend's behavior, and do not invite him to a social event. He forbids her to go to that church again and threatens to beat her if she sees any of those friends.
- A lesbian who was raised in an Orthodox Jewish home is

consistently berated by her non-Jewish partner for practicing a "patriarchal" religion, and is accused of not being "feminist enough."

- A Moslem woman confesses to her community that her husband is beating her, and asks for help in getting away from him. He tells everyone that she is crazy and making this up. Her friends and family believe her husband. When she tries to leave, they help him find her.
- A gay couple attends the only gay-friendly church in their area. After two years of abuse, the survivor decides to leave. His abuser threatens to kill him. Although the church is the survivor's primary support, it is no longer safe for him to be there. In order to protect himself, he must cut off all ties with the church.

The stories are endless. They are stories of women betrayed by their long-standing

religious communities. They are stories of survivors whose most cherished spiritual beliefs are belittled and ridiculed by vengeful partners. They are stories of women who believe they must be crazy. They are stories of people with no place to turn.

### Healing the spiritual self

Some faiths promote belief systems that are incompatible with the experiences of surviving an abusive relationship. For instance, twelve-step programs uphold the belief that we are powerless over our situation, or that we must turn over our control to a higher power. Christian teachings emphasize forgiveness, rather than holding abusers accountable for their actions. To someone whose life has been controlled by their abuser, healing is about taking back control, not giving it up. Healing is about directing your anger at the person who hurt you, not at yourself.

Most survivors of abusive relationships don't trust themselves. Crazy-making emotional and verbal abuse alters their sense of truth and reality; isolation shuts down their sense of personal empowerment. Their spiritual self is buried under many layers of pain, and it will take a great deal of healing to re-discover that sense of self.

Spirituality can play an important role in healing from abuse. While some people experience their religious institution as a place that turns against them in a time of crisis, others find a strong spiritual community is their ticket to survival. Many say faith gave them the strength to keep fighting against all odds, or helped them believe they

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**Naomi Tucker** has been active in the battered women's movement for nine years. She currently serves on the board of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and helped found Shalom Bayit, the Bay Area Jewish Women's Task Force on Domestic Violence. She is a writer, teacher, public speaker, and editor of an upcoming anthology on bisexual politics.

# Surviving HIV

Some thoughts for my brothers and sisters

by Hap Stewart

So, you've tested positive for HIV, or you actually have AIDS; me, too! I was exposed in the late 1970s and, when I tested HIV+ in 1985, almost everyone portrayed HIV as a terminal disease which no one survived. 100% fatal. This message was communicated by the media, physicians, other caregivers and persons with HIV themselves. Sadly, this fatalistic message hastened the deaths of thousands and is still believed by most people today in 1994. This message is false. *HIV is survivable.* There are many long-time survivors of 12-15 years who remain healthy. I don't have all the

answers, yet I'd like to share with you some ideas on how to be a long-term survivor. Survival — yours, mine, ours. Listen up!

**Decide whether you really want to live.** "Of course, I want to live," you respond. "Wouldn't anyone?" In my experience ... no. In fact, some persons are relieved to have HIV because it absolves them of taking responsibility for their lives. It validates being a "victim." The foundation for HIV survival is a conscious choice that life is precious. This requires some deep self-examination. The will to live is a powerful force. Alone, it does

not guarantee survival, yet it empowers the possibility for survival. Without the will to live, you are probably not going to survive HIV (or cancer, heart disease, etc.). If this seems harsh, reach deeper inside; ask yourself what's true for you. Life isn't fair — it's not fair for the skeletal children of Somalia, either. Can we hold these children in our hearts? Can we find meaning and purpose amidst so much pain? Do you really want to live? No one else can answer these questions for you.

**Learn about HIV.** The information is available. It's your

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would survive.

This October I witnessed some wonderful examples of healing from abuse within a spiritual context. In honor of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, whose theme is a shelter of peace, a coalition of Jewish groups held forums throughout the Bay Area on domestic violence. Each of the forums included information from battered women and their advocates, a rabbinic perspective on abuse and healing in Judaism, and a closing circle with singing and celebration. Even to a largely secular Jewish audience, it was powerful to conclude such a serious discussion on a joyous note of healing. The spiritual dimension of the program helped people connect with the topic on

an emotional level. Everyone in the room felt our strength as Jewish women to stand together against violence.

### Community action

No community — whether held together by culture, sexual identity, spiritual practice, or politics — is immune from domestic violence. The commitment to end domestic violence has traditionally come from grass-roots feminist organizing and the battered women's movement.

### National Resources and Further Information

*Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 1914 N. 34th Street, Suite 105, Seattle, WA 98103, 206/634-1903*  
An interfaith, educational ministry that addresses religious issues related to domestic violence.

*National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, P.O. Box 18749, Denver, CO 80218, 303/839-1852.*

**NO ONE DESERVES TO BE ABUSED!**



# SURVIVING HIV

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responsibility to get it. There are many sources of good information, such as books, medical journals, HIV newsletters, the resource library of your local AIDS agency, HIV seminars, weekly newspapers like the *San Francisco Sentinel* (if you are homophobic, get over it and read the gay/lesbian press where cutting edge HIV information appears). If you live in or near San Francisco (LA or New York), A Different Light Bookstore carries more than 100 titles on HIV. Read some of them! Talk to your physician, talk to other persons living with HIV, particularly long-term survivors. I've been amazed over the years how little people with HIV know about HIV. Hey, it's your life! HIV is survivable but, if you don't care enough to do some homework, why should anyone else care? *Wake up!* Learning about HIV will support your ability to make knowledgeable treatment decisions. Learning about HIV supports self-empowerment. It's the next step after deciding you really want to live — even if you're not 100% sure you want to live.

**Create a partnership with your physician.** Your relationship with your healthcare provider is crucial. Your doctor can be a tremendous support or a major negative influence. Ask yourself some questions: Does my doctor care about me? Does he/she have a compassionate heart? Is my doctor knowledgeable about HIV? Does my doctor encourage me to learn about HIV? Does my doctor answer my questions? Does my doctor encourage me to share treatment decisions? Does my

doctor have an inquiring, open mind about alternative therapies? Will my doctor support me medically and emotionally even when we have honest disagreements? (Yes, it's OK to disagree.) If you can answer 'yes' to these questions, consider yourself fortunate because you have a valuable ally to face the coming challenges. The typical person with HIV can not answer these questions 'yes.' I am not impressed by vast technical knowledge if physicians are unable to connect with their patients at the healing level of the heart. Often, much of their technical "scientific" knowledge turns out to be inaccurate, anyway. Choose a physician with *heart*.

**Make peace with ambiguity and the unknown.** HIV is a journey into the unknown. And the unknown is where our deepest fears reside, particularly the fear of death. But consider the delicious paradox: the unknown is where our growth as human beings occurs. HIV challenges us to examine our fears at ever deeper levels. It tests our willingness to move beyond our conditional thinking and accept ambiguity — perhaps, even to embrace the unknown as welcome adventure. It offers us the opportunity to know our own courage and the courage of others. It is the realm where our hearts can open to the limitless wonder of mystery. Too metaphysical, you say? Perhaps, but you are going to die (maybe tomorrow, mundanely, in front of a bus). Little by little, examination of our fears will free us to live creatively, will enable us to forge our own

passionate lives. I don't have dramatic answers here; rather I share the questions with you.

**Strengthen your immune system.** With a strengthened immune system, it's possible to withstand HIV infection. While there is no "perfect" health protocol (just as there is no "cure" for HIV and may never be), there are proven approaches to immune system health. For example: balanced nutrition without becoming obsessive; quality multi-vitamins with emphasis on anti-oxidants like vitamin C; acupuncture to achieve inner balance; Chinese herbs; regular exercise; massage; some form of meditation; elimination of parasites (flagyl worked for me; herbs can help); elimination of alcohol, recreational drugs, caffeine, sugar and tobacco. Also, learn about and consider experimental alternative therapies such as DNCB, acemannan, bitter melon, Compound Q and others. I personally believe DNCB shows much promise and needs to be studied in clinical trials. The average physician has never heard of DNCB because it addresses a different model of the pathogenesis of HIV. Do the research yourself!

**Don't take retrovir (AZT).** Give your immune system a break! Scientists and physicians are not unanimous in endorsing AZT and its nucleoside cousins, ddI and ddC. In fact, the new NIH guidelines to physicians state: "Treatment with AZT is no longer necessarily recommended for early HIV infection." This is a significant break from the 1990 guidelines. The recent Concorde Study demonstrated that, while AZT may have some benefit in delaying disease

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## We Make Our First Fire by Kristy Nielsen

Since I know how, I give directions. I ask Gina for kindling. She brings back thin dried strips of willow gathered up from where the sky is hidden by a canopy that unzips to let her in. I ask Neal for larger pieces. He drags an entire downed tree to our site, splits it, while Gina snaps some twigs: the sacrifices required for longing and finding this exquisite. I clear a space of underbrush, place stones in a circle, and gather the pieces of curled pastel birch bark. I look about from my skin and bones at trees with fruit, at all that could expel the three of us, but won't. I know we're free to make our fire. This feels like praying to me.

I lay the bark and twigs, then light the match. The flames start slow, so, leaning in the dirt, I blow the fire, encourage it to catch. These woods in darkened vespers disconcert us, free from city lights we could mistake for the moon. As if we hold old spirits in our heads, we move with care. We know we're not immune to the song of regret, to the crying of the dead. We feel the same encouragement from the air and stand around the fire, side by side. It's just a step to touch, to take the dare. In this new light, it's easy to decide. We trust the thrill that moves below the skin. This lifetime seems right. This lullaby. This sin.

*Kristy Nielsen has a Master's Degree in Creative Writing from Illinois State University. She has published many of her poems and won several awards for her writing.*

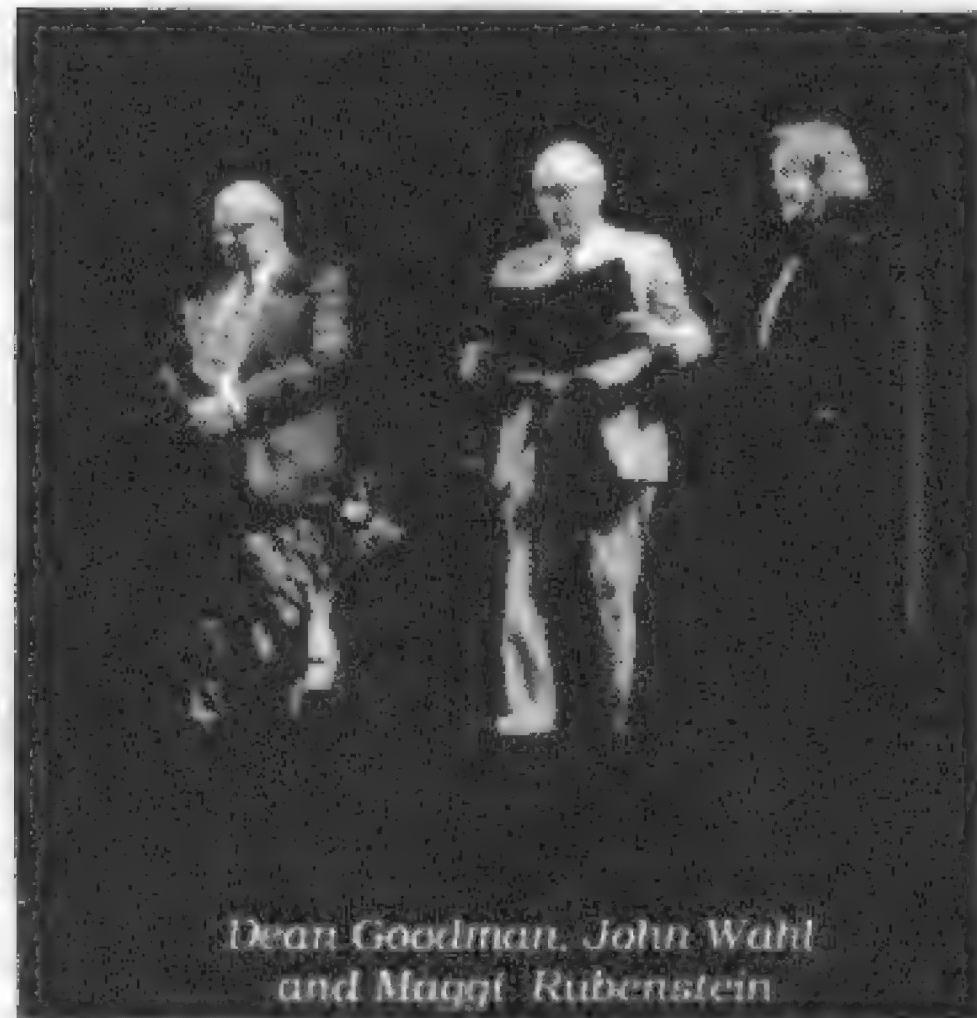


# our world

by John Rosin

First, heartfelt and hearty congratulations to actor Dean Goodman on the 50th anniversary of his debut on the San Francisco stage! Dean was honored November 8 at the Theatre on the Square. Attorney John Wahl and our own Dr. Maggi Rubenstein presented him with a resolution recognizing his contributions to the cultural life of San Francisco. The resolution had been moved by San Francisco Supervisor Terence Hallinan and approved by the full Board of Supervisors. Be sure to pick up a copy of Dean's soon-to-be-published book, *Maria, Marlene and Me*, (that's Marlene, as in Dietrich, naturally!).

Dr. Maggi, by the way, is having tremendous success with her series, "Psychodramas for Life." Three psychodramas were held in 1993. So what's a psychodrama? (No, it is not a drama starring Anthony Perkins!) Psychodrama is a process in which participants from the audience are given the opportunity to take part in communication rehearsals in which they act out situations of



Dean Goodman, John Wahl  
and Maggi Rubenstein

their own choosing with other members of the audience who play the parts of friend, partner, family member, co-workers, or others. Events are held at the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality on Franklin Street, so keep your eyes peeled for the next interaction.

Stern Grove was the setting for bisexual activist Lani Kaahumanu's 50th birthday party in October. I remember



Lani Kaahumanu's 50th Birthday

years ago that Lani predicted she was going to have "such a 50th birthday party," and she didn't let us down for a minute! Dancing, drinks, an endless buffet, and mutual friends who flew in from all over the country (not to mention music that you couldn't stop dancing to; long live the 70's!) made this an event to remember forever.

"Fruits and Chocolates" (or is that "Fruits Bearing Chocolates"? ) was the theme of Ellen Clary and Coe Salzgeber's heartwarming housewarming in November. The collective chocolate caffeine rush was only one



Ellen & Coe: "Fruits & Chocolates"

little highlight of this truly outstanding party, another in a long series of wonderful events hosted by these two great supporters of our community.

Et cetera: in June, we enjoyed former **Anything That Moves** editor Karla Rossi's farewell performance in "Did You Come or Fake It?" We will miss her in future readings of this play...Thanks in no small part to the leadership of Betsy Sutherland, the East Bay Bi-Friendly group continues to attract a stream of new attendees...The Jewish Bisexual Caucus continues to thrive and nourish the Bi community with rich Jewish traditions including the Sukkot, or harvest, festival, held in October (at which my camera battery died spontaneously and inconveniently), and the annual Chanukah party and fund-raiser for **Anything That Moves** in December...

Thunder Bay dance club in Berkeley has gone Gothic on

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**Anything That Moves**

## the buzz from boston

While on a recent trip to Beantown, I met up with Robyn Ochs, co-founder of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network, dropping by her office in Harvard Yard (or, if you prefer, "Hahvahd Yahd"). In June, BiVersity Boston (Boston's co-gender group) put on yet another successful BiFest in conjunction with Boston's 1993 "A Celebration of Pride" march. This year's march posters included the words bisexual and transgender for the first time ever (is the San Francisco parade committee listening?!)

BiVersity continues its successful monthly bi brunch and monthly bi space.

In September, the Boston Bisexual Women's Network (BBWN) entered its second decade of existence. BBWN is the longest continuously operating bisexual women's organization in the world, with a current mailing list of approximately 600. In 1993, BBWN hosted a number of potluck brunches and other social events, and put out six more issues of BiWomen (subscriptions: \$20 (sliding scale) to BBWN, PO Box 639,

Cambridge, MA 02140).

The East Coast Bisexual Network voted recently to rename itself the Bisexual Resource Center, to more closely reflect its increasingly international activities. (By the way, the 11th edition of the International Directory of Bisexual Groups came out in January 1994. To order, send \$5 to BRC, PO Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140).

Tufts University is offering, for the second time, a course on bisexual identity,

and most area college and university lesbigay groups now have the "B-word" in their names (as well as active bi's in their memberships!).

There is a new streak of activism in the Boston bi community, with a Media and Publicity Task Force starting up. This task force hopes to "bring bisexual organizations and resources up from the underground" and will focus on ways to increase bi visibility in Boston and the New England area.

Thanks to Robyn

for e-mailing this update on "our world" in Boston!

Finally, I accidentally ran into Wayne Bryant, of the Boston Bisexual Men's Network, on the Boston subway, and he tells me that his book on bisexual characters in film is well on its way to publication.



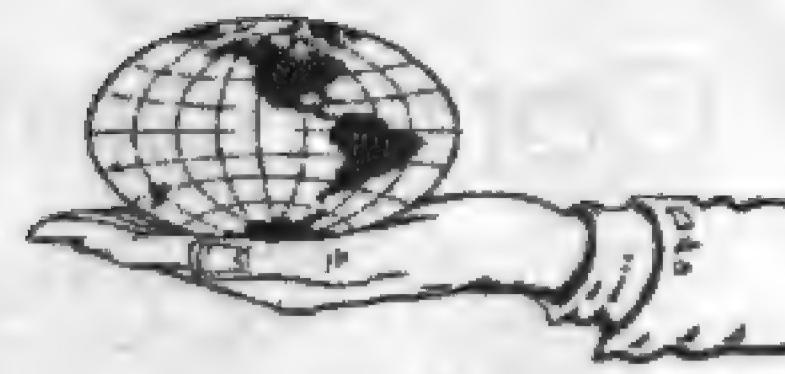
Wayne Bryant & Robyn Ochs



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Saturday nights, and is rapidly becoming a favorite repose of Bi-Friendly souls out to kick up their heels... Our list of e-mail subscribers to the Bi-Friendly flyer continues to grow... A cute story from the Bi West conference in San Diego: the costume

party and contest was attended by two young sailors who won the contest for wearing their real uniforms! It's a new world, I guess, and, it appears, increasingly "our world" in every sense of the concept. See you next issue!

*Uncredited photos by John Rostin*



# Community, Openness, Acceptance:

by Katie Mechem

Seven years ago I was experiencing some scary health problems, and then the diagnosis came: multiple sclerosis. Amid the shock, trauma, and frantic attempts to cope, I did not expect much of a silver lining to the storm clouds. But I can now say that learning to deal with my drastically altered physical and emotional landscape has indeed been a profound experience of growth and healing.

I received invaluable support in this process by participating in twelve-step programs (groups modeled after AA). I had started attending meetings a few months before my diagnosis, and the spiritual foundation they provided was a great help during that time. I had never pursued spirituality much before, and had never needed it so keenly. The groups also emphasize openness: facing the truth about yourself, your self-defeating patterns, and the emotions they have covered up.

Along with the support of twelve-step groups, another absolute necessity for me was the community of people with disabilities and chronic illnesses. Just like in coming out (first as "lesbian," then as bisexual), I needed role models, to learn how other people coped, and to counteract society's stereotypes of people with disabilities.

So, what exactly is MS? Multiple sclerosis is an autoim-

mune disease that affects motor and sensory functions of the nervous system. The onset of new symptoms and remissions are very unpredictable, it varies widely in severity among different people, and there is no known cause or cure.

What happened for me? My physical symptoms included vision problems; occasional difficulty walking; dizziness; numbness, burning, or tightness in various parts of my body; mild loss of muscle control; and slightly distorted hearing. Fatigue was an ongoing problem, and became severe during flare-ups. For three years, these lovely symptoms came and went in various combinations every six to eight weeks, usually disappearing after about ten days.

As you may imagine, one of my biggest lessons in this was letting go of expectations, and coming to accept whatever

was going on at the time. With so many changing symptoms and so much unpredictability, there was no way I could plan for all the possibilities of what might happen. I had to learn to have faith that I would find a way to deal with whatever came along. It gave me a kind of terrible freedom, where there was no such thing as routine or following convention—I had to reinvent my life every day, or even ten times a day.

Like my physical symptoms, my emotions were also on an intense, unpredictable roller coaster. The MS brought me some heavy doses of loss, grief, depression, and loneliness. Fear, anger, and frustration also loomed very large. Fear about how I would cope if I lost the ability to do X, fear of losing friends, of losing my job (I was very lucky to keep it in spite of taking time off frequently), and of having to give up activities that were important to me. Frustration at how hard things were, anger at fate, at insensitive health practitioners, at people in my life who weren't there for me, and at anyone



Katie Mechem currently works as a cog in state government, but will soon return to school in rehabilitation counseling. She encourages people with chronic illness, anyone else who relates to her article, or eligible singles to drop her a line care of **Anything That Moves**. Photo by Darlene Weide.

who acted out society's stereotypes.

My commitment to recovery from addictive/compulsive patterns meant that I could no longer escape feelings through my lifelong habits of overeating, and of trying to control all kinds of things that were not my business. Now I was beginning to learn to identify emotions, that they were OK, that I could live through them, and that they didn't have to have absolute control of my life. Luckily I found people to talk to who were dealing or had dealt with similar states. Their openness and acceptance of me and of themselves helped me begin to develop acceptance, too, as well as hope and faith that I could get through it.

As I went through all these difficult emotions, I had to reach for whatever moments of peace, beauty, and genuine connection with people I could find. Twelve-step groups encourage building a personal spiritual foundation, which for me included using pieces of different types of meditation, prayer, and affirmations. Walking in nature (or sometimes driving or sitting, depending on my physical condition), writing, and music were important ways to discover, express, and release what was going on with me.

In learning to really care for myself, to pay close attention and focus on healing, I grew in ways that helped to heal my relationships with other people, too. I had to struggle with having too many expectations and criticisms of myself, and had to develop a huge amount of patience, tolerance, and gentleness in how I dealt with my illness. I needed to avoid too much stressful conflict with people, and this began to happen—through

minding my own business of healing, and by bringing my attitude of patience and acceptance to others.

I needed help in many different ways, from health care, to rides, to help with daily tasks. The scariest stereotype of disabled people I had was that they (and now maybe I, too) were helpless and pitiful, always having to beg for help

and be

eternal-  
nally  
grate-  
ful.

But I  
learned

that I wasn't "helpless." I had to actively participate in making decisions about what I really needed and felt comfortable with.

I also found that I had plenty to offer in exchange for the help I received, from meals, lending my car, to hiring friends who were unemployed to help me. I also brought a different type of awareness to my interactions with people, which made them comfortable talking on a deeper level than in everyday life. I think my different mental/psychic state came partly from spending a lot of time in bed, which sometimes was like a meditation retreat, from grappling with the difficult stuff in my life, and from having to live in the moment since everything was so unpredictable.

Another thing that counteracted my feelings of helplessness, was being of service to others with disabilities or illnesses. An excellent disability group (on the twelve-step model) that I attended had stopped meeting, so I organized and helped lead a similar one closer to my home. My phone number was also on our

publicity for a long time, which gave me the opportunity to take calls from many, many people who were reaching out for help, sometimes for the first time.

Well, guess what? For the last four years my MS has been almost entirely in remission, and my health and abilities have steadily improved: I even went backpacking last summer!

The emotional and spiritual growth I experienced may have

played a role in the remission, because it has helped me to consistently take physical steps towards healing, including acupuncture, healthy eating, exercise, and coping with stress. Or my remission might have just been luck—by no means do I want to imply that all illness or disability can be cured by emotional and spiritual growth.

But I did gain healing and growth in many other aspects of my life through struggling with my MS. With the help of the supportive communities I found, and the spiritual direction of twelve-step groups, I have been able to gradually replace some of my panic, fear, stress, and need to control with faith, acceptance, letting go, and living more in the present. I also have a greater understanding of disability and illness, and of people going through many kinds of crises. Today, one of my greatest joys is when I am able to be there for others who are going through something similar.

\* Recommended reading – *Living Well: A Twelve-Step Approach to Chronic Illness and Disability* by Martha Cleveland.



# Surviving Arthur by Joshua

My father died last fall. People who didn't know me well pronounced the requisite "I'm sorry." Closer friends said "congratulations." My own reaction was somewhere between the two.

My father was a man filled with bile. Though he drank Pepto Bismol like soda and ate Maalox like candy, he was plagued by foul gases. I could never tell if it was the indigestion that made him so angry or vice-versa.

Growing up with Arthur Greenberg was like living in a windowless room with an active volcano. I existed in anticipatory fear, always awaiting the next explosion.

The only time I can remember fearlessly loving my father was before he first beat me at the age of four. Sadly, I have very few memories of that tranquil time.

The first time he beat me it was a bright, sunny day:

## My Earliest Memory

We went to the park  
on a Sunday afternoon,  
not far from our apartment building,  
and I took the shortcut home.  
I didn't wait for you  
at the appointed place,  
because I didn't know a place had been  
appointed.  
I just went home.  
I stood outside the building  
waiting for you,  
but you didn't come.  
All the neighbors,  
sweet little old Jewish women,  
all dead now,  
kept asking where you were.  
I said I didn't know, and  
the tension mounted  
with their questions.  
Finally you came,  
yelling and screaming  
that you didn't know where I had been  
all this time.  
You took off your belt,  
and I'd never known  
a belt could be used that way,  
and I couldn't sit for a week.  
From then on  
I learned to fear you,  
rather than to love you

— Sharon Beth 7/86

Subsequent beatings sparked over lesser things. The dishes hadn't been done. I wouldn't

eat one night at a deli. I scored less than 90% on an exam.

The heavy back of my father's hand pounding against my temples was always synchronized with the phrases, "You see that wall? You see that fucking wall, Sharon? I'll put your head through that wall." Many times he tried. The room would spin and echo as my child-sized skull bounced off the plaster-covered bricks.

There was no spanking in my family. Arthur's preferred modes of discipline included punches to the head, kicks to the genitals, choking, and heavy belting combined with verbal humiliation. He'd let up only when convinced my spirit had been fully broken.

Hours after pummeling the shit out of me he'd be sorry. His after-beating apologies burned worse than the rubbing alcohol he'd apply to my fresh wounds. "Are you okay? You gonna be alright? Daddy loves you. Do you know your Daddy loves you? Do you think I like doing this to you, Sharon? Do you think Daddy likes hurting you? It's not your fault. Do you understand? Daddy just has a lot on his mind. I shouldn't take it out on my little girl. I'm sorry. I won't do that again. Daddy won't hurt you anymore. I promise. Are you still crying? Go wash your face with cold water."

In the early days every beating was followed by a guilty apology speech and a promise never to do it again. Every promise was broken.

Arthur hurt us (my brother, my mom and me) in sadistically creative ways. He'd get at me by hurting or taking away the things I loved. For a short while we had three kittens. Those tiny cats were my best friends. One winter morning I wondered why the kittens didn't follow me to the bathroom. They weren't pouncing on my slippers feet or tugging at my nightgown or crying to be fed. In a panic I searched the sleeping apartment. When I looked at the living room windows, there were three shivering mounds of snow in each of the empty flowerpots on the outside windowsills. Susie, Jenny and Princess had been locked out of our third story windows all night, crying silently behind the heavy glass. Even as I carried them inside and wrapped them in warm towels I expected violent retaliation for letting them in without permission. Soon after, Arthur packed my three best friends in a suitcase and took them out of our apartment, away from me forever. I never knew where they went.

I hated that man called my father. I couldn't

imagine it was biologically possible he had anything to do with creating me. I wished him dead. Starting at age five, I begged my mother to divorce Arthur. At fourteen I gave up waiting for her to save me and left home myself.

When I remember my father and my childhood, it seems like a distant story that couldn't really have happened. If I didn't have friends and family and pictures and New York City Child Protective Services records to prove the past, I could almost imagine it never was.

Except for the nightmares. In nightmares his grimacing red face is still opened wide, close enough to see the yellow stains in his rotting teeth; close enough to smell his foul, fishy, hollering breath. His head is cartoonishly huge so close to my own.

A few months ago I dreamed my father was going to kill my mother. I saw him point a gun at her head and heard the click of the safety unlocking. I jumped up at 5:30 a.m. in a cold sweat, knowing there was little I could do to protect my mother 3000 miles away. I paced my apartment for thirty minutes, waiting for 6 a.m. If Judie was still alive, she'd be getting to her office at 9 a.m. New York time. At 6:02 I dialed the eleven-digit number, praying she would answer. Arthur had tried to kill her once before.

"Good morning." "Mom?" "Hi! What are you doing up at this hour?" I warned her of my dream, hoping to god it wasn't a premonition, and begged her to be careful.

The day Mom called with the news I was halfway out the door en route to my semi-annual HIV test.

My father was dead. I never thought it would happen so soon. We'd all expected him to stick around forever just to torture us, heart disease and all. My first thought was, "I can have my phone number listed now."

I dazed my way to the women's clinic. Strange visions flooded me. Suddenly I was four on my father's shoulders on a summer night. The stubble of his beard was scratching my bare inner thighs and his smiling cheeks were round and hot in my tiny hands. I held tightly, trying both not to choke him and not to fall. We were happy.

I contemplated my own life and my own mortality as the needle drew blood from my arm. I always thought I'd throw a party when

my father died. What I felt instead was much quieter and more subtle.

I felt sadness, not because I would miss him or I thought his death was any great loss to humanity (I've known many nicer people who've died), but because I remembered a few moments a long, long time ago when I loved my father and my father loved me and somehow those pure feelings and good intentions got lost. I felt sadness because

Arthur made no effort to change his abusive behavior while he was alive and now that he was dead, there was no chance he ever would. The histories he'd made with my brother, my mother and me became irrevocable and permanent.

After the sadness came anger. As a final barb from the grave, my father bequeathed his sum worth to my brother and nothing to me. Insensitive relatives called and added insult to injury by saying things like, "Your poor brother, he was the one who really understood your father."

After the anger came indifference, and then relief. I decided my life had been just fine all this time without any help from my father. I had struggled financially, but my life was rich with experience. His death wouldn't change either of those things.

The last time I saw my father was 1986. I dropped his name from mine years ago. I used to say I lived as though he were already dead. Lately, I'd been feeling grown up, responsible, and free of the childhood anger and sadness that weighted me for so long. My father's death affirmed those feelings.

As a child, I never thought I'd see the age of twenty-five. I never thought I'd be happy. But somehow I survived and managed to function. Here I am an adult. I've created a life for myself: an apartment in San Francisco, a gorgeous network of mostly queer friends who love me, a boa constrictor who lives with me, a sex-industry-financed college degree I don't use. I edit a magazine and I'm learning to play tenor sax. I get to the gym occasionally. I like my life. I like being alive.

Arthur Ira Greenberg was born in the South Bronx on January 7, 1944. He died in Pennsylvania on October 5, 1993, alone on the

SEE ARTHUR, PAGE 51



Photo by Darlene Weide

**Ask Auntie Margo & Uncle Bill**

# What Your Mother Never Told You...

Dear Auntie Margo,

My girlfriend doesn't lubricate very much during sex play, although she says she's turned on. Sometimes she wants to stop because she says she's getting irritated. Do you think we should use a lubricant? Any suggestions?

Jasmine

Dear Jasmine,

Different women have different amounts of natural lubrication, the moisture that occurs on the walls of the vagina during sexual arousal. And a woman may have different amounts at different times during her cycle.

The best kind of lubrication to buy for genital stimulation is a water-based one. There are many available, with fun names such as ForPlay, Slip, Wet, and Astroglide. If you can't find these, the stand-by KY Jelly is fine. Use as much as you like for comfort. Water-based lubricants are the ONLY kind that are ok to use with latex. If your mother ever told you to use vaseline for sex, DON'T! Vaseline may clog the pores in the vagina and interfere with the natural cleansing process.

Massage oils and lotions are fine for body sensuality but most of them have alcohol and scents which can be irritating to the genitals.

Some over-the-counter medications for colds and allergies cause dryness of mucous membranes including the vulva and vagina, and using marijuana can have the same consequences. If your lover is using any of these substances, she may



want to consider the trade-off.

ENJOY!

Auntie Margo

Dear Uncle Bill:

I am interested in body piercing. How can I find out more about piercing, and where can I find a professional piercer?

Louis, Columbus, Ohio

Dear Louis:

Your mother never told you about piercing because she probably didn't know much herself. The modern "piercing movement" has caught hold within the past twenty years, and there is now a wealth of information available regarding piercing. You can pierce a lot of things besides earlobes, more than Mom ever imagined, I'll bet.

Nipples, noses, and other body parts can vary quite a bit in size and shape, so different jewelry may be required for the same piercing on different individuals. Bars, tucks, and other shapes of body jewelry are available in addition to the classic ring.

And you're right—piercing is a skilled activity requiring training, experience, and sterile conditions, so finding a professional piercer is important. That old cliché, "Do not try this at home!" has never been truer than here. There are professional piercing studios in many cities around the U.S. and Canada. One way to find a professional is to get recommendations. Another way is to find out if the piercer has been

trained and certified by Fakir Musafar, one of the founders of the modern piercing movement, and a professional piercer himself. Those near San Francisco, Los Angeles, or New York can visit a Gauntlet studio, the first "chain" of piercing parlors. However, there are now studios and trained professionals in virtually every sizeable city.

Some people prefer to be pierced in a spiritual, ritualistic setting, perhaps with music; some prefer the clinical efficiency of a studio such as Gauntlet, while others might fantasize about being pierced as part of an S/M scene with one or more loved ones

***What your mother probably never told you was that Auntie Margo & Uncle Bill are available to answer all your questions on sex, love, relationships, etc. Send them c/o BABN, 2404 California #24, SF, CA 94115. We will only use your initials or a pen name, so don't worry, your mother won't find out...***

***Auntie Margo*** (aka Margo Rila, Ed. D.), is a sexologist, educator, and counselor. She is the Training Coordinator for San Francisco Sex Information; on the faculty of the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality; founding member of the Bi Center in San Francisco, and of BiTE (Coalition of Bisexual Therapists & Educators)—

***Uncle Bill*** (aka Bill Brent) edits and publishes two sex-oriented publications. Black Sheets is a bi-oriented 'zine for kinky, queer, intelligent and irreverent folk. The Black Book is a 196-page, illustrated resource guide for the erotic explorer. Bill has also worked as a switchboard supervisor with San Francisco Sex Information—

present. The choices are limited only by your imagination. Regardless of the context, piercing can be a very intimate, vulnerable experience, so it's important to feel comfortable with your pierce. As with tattoo artists, I think it's fine to interview one or more piercers beforehand, once you are serious about getting pierced. If you have specific needs or ideas regarding jewelry, style or setting, this is the time to bring them up.

Aftercare is extremely important, especially in the early stages of healing. Your piercer can give you information on how to care for your piercing. Depending on the body part, piercings can take from a couple weeks to several months to heal.

One way to learn more is to read *Modern Primitives*, a book of interviews with people into various forms of body modification, including many into piercing. Flash Video also sells several videos featuring body piercing. My directory, *The Black Book*, lists many piercers, studios, and body jewelry sources nationwide, described in their own words. Quarterly magazines such as Fakir Musafar's *Body Play* and Gauntlet's *PFIQ* feature body piercing information, photos, and interviews.

#### Sources:

- RE/Search Publications, 20 Romolo #B, San Francisco, CA 94133 (*Modern Primitives* and catalog of books and T-shirts.)
- Flash Video, P.O. Box 410052, San Francisco, CA 94141 (send \$5 for catalog).
- The Black Book, P.O. Box 31155-ATM, San Francisco, CA 94131
- The Gauntlet/PFIQ, 2377 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94114, (415) 431-3133 (SF body piercing studio; body jewelry sales; can direct you to LA and NYC)
- Fakir Musafar/Body Play, P.O. Box 2575, Menlo Park, CA 94026 (415) 324-0543. Master piercer, body jewelry sales; *Body Play* magazine.

## SURVIVING HIV

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 42

progression, it has no benefit for survival. At the very least, read about AZT therapy, talk with other HIV+ persons and don't allow yourself to be pressured by your doctor or anyone else, including me. Explore your options and make an informed choice. For years, I've been in HIV support groups and watched as many others — who were taking AZT — slowly weaken and die. Was it HIV disease progression? Maybe. Was it AZT toxicity ravaging the immune system? A stronger maybe. The definitive answers to these questions are still unknown, but I believe that AZT therapy is not only ineffective, but actively harmful to our survival. In my personal experience, the vast majority of long-term survivors have never taken AZT. These are my personal opinions and observations, not medical advice.

#### Get involved and serve

**others.** Why are we here if not to learn kindness and how to give and receive love? Does God/Goddess/Great Spirit care about our accumulated toys? How important are our "secrets"? Does it serve anyone to hold to the shame? Does it feel good? Why are we reluctant to explore a deeper level of self-responsibility, serving our brothers and sisters as well as ourselves? Just a few of the many questions of being human. All people affected by HIV are our extended family (actually, all people are our family). We can get involved and help create a more humane world for ourselves and others. We do not have to become Mother Theresa replicas, only more fully ourselves connected to the world we steward. Another personal

observation — backed by numerous clinical studies — is that long-term survivors do not sit home and feel sorry for themselves. They volunteer, take political action and discover purpose in their lives. We can live wonderful, creative lives and inspire others to more deeply touch their own hearts. We can make a difference!

These are some thoughts about surviving HIV. It requires courage and an open heart to be fully human. AIDS, perhaps, makes a contribution by dramatizing this challenge for us. I share the journey with you.

**Hap Stewart** lives in Kentfield, CA, where he serves on the Marin AIDS Commission and is a long-time volunteer at the Marin AIDS Project. He is the father of three and grandfather of four, and has been a person with HIV for 15 years.

## ARTHUR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 49

floor in front of a television. His body was lowered into an army veteran's plot one week later. His current girlfriend, my brother, and a hired rabbi were the only witnesses to the burial. There was no funeral. Nobody wanted to pay for one and no one would have come, anyway. My brother David summed up Arthur's life this way: "Forty-nine years and the man was never happy."

The nightmare is over.  
May he rest in peace.

(And may we all live happily ever after).

**S. Josh Beth** is a writer, actor, musician, safe sex educator, and stripper with a college degree. A second generation child of the Bronx, she has lived in SF Bay Area for 8 1/2 years and is moving to Hawaii to attend barber college.

# Six Families

by Jim Frazin

- *Pagan Babies* by Greg Johnson
- *The Man Who Fell in Love with the Moon* by Tom Spanbauer
- *Home at the End of the World* by Michael Cunningham
- *He, She and It* and *Summer People*, both by Marge Piercy
- *The Fifth Sacred Thing* by Starhawk

The books reviewed here all contain bisexual characters and all are interesting reading. Some proved interesting because they are good literature, others because of the ways they portray bisexual characters. They all attempt to address significant issues in our society.

Some of the characters are intentionally bisexual. That is, they understand something about themselves and the author understands something about them. With others it is clear that the author does not understand and has stumbled into stereotypes however wittingly or unwittingly.

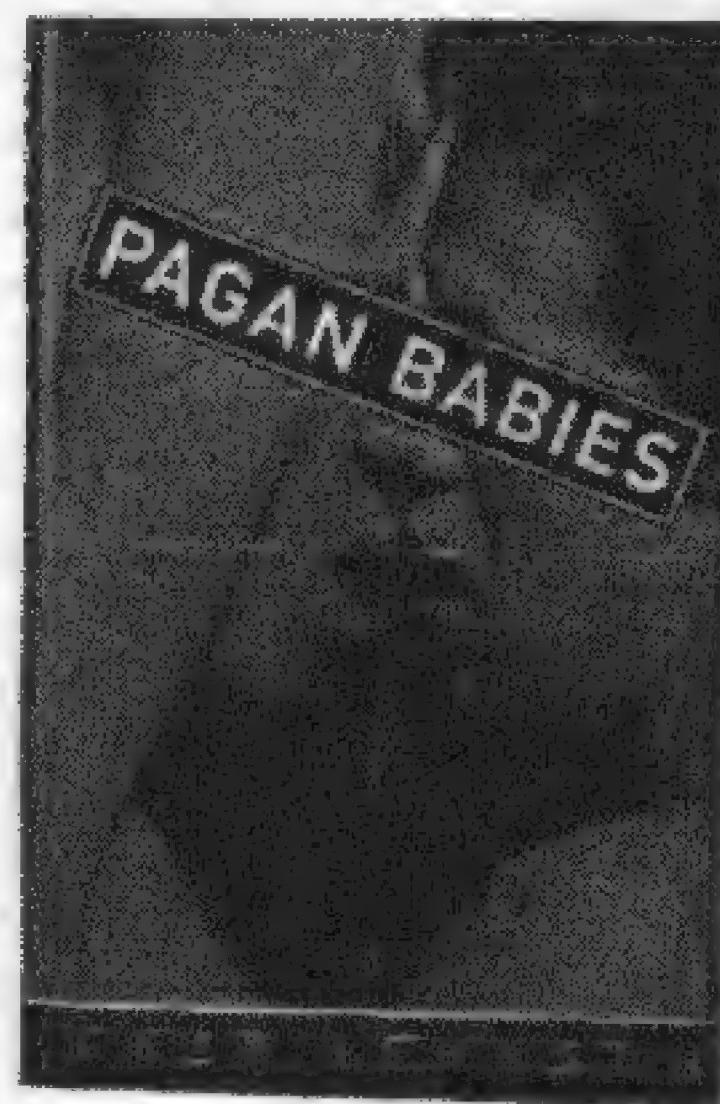
These novels have more in common than just bisexuality. Each author places his or her characters in unorthodox families and communities. Together the novels cut across two centuries, presenting us with a view of bisexual lives in the present, future and past.

*Home at the End of the World*, *Pagan Babies* and *Summer People* largely reflect where we are now, both in a very personal way and in a political and social context. The picture is not very rosy. These three novels are about contemporary individuals living in various conventional and unconventional family configurations. They are alienated and divorced from a larger community which has psychological and spiritual integrity. The message seems to be that isolated, unconnected individuals are doomed to fruitless, Sisyphean struggle.

*The Fifth Sacred Thing* and *He, She and It* give us alternative and contrasting views of the future, in which large spiritual and moral issues (how to heal from and end violence, what is the relationship of humans to the non-human life forms [e.g., cyborgs] they create and, having created life, what is our response to it?) are raised and grappled with in mighty ways with

surprising, painful and growthful results. And in the process these authors give us sorely needed vision and excellent literature. The vision as I saw it was that while moral struggle is an individual and deeply personal experience, the world benefits most when we struggle as a community to reach a vital, significant decision, and when we reach that decision without compromise or accommodation.

*The Man Who Fell in Love with the Moon* gives us a view of the past which, to paraphrase words of one reviewer, will make John Wayne roll over in his grave (to protect his hind quarters, no doubt).

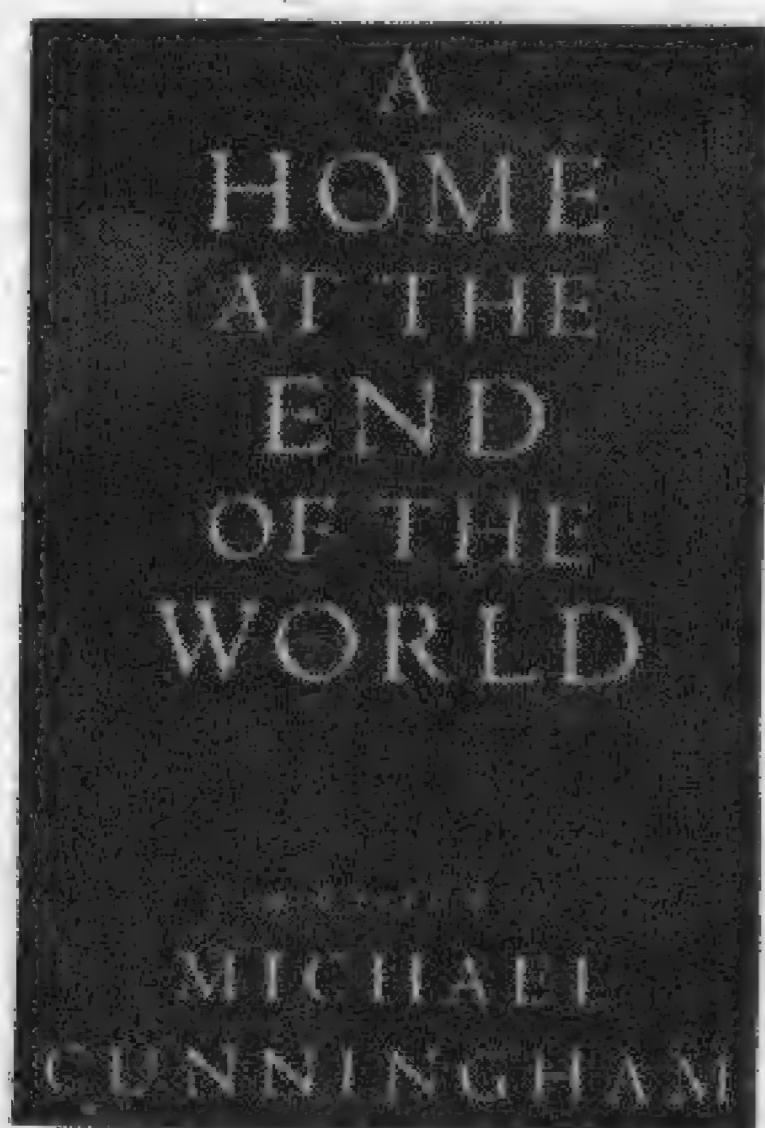


*Pagan Babies* by Greg Johnson is not about the revival of pagan spirituality. The title derives from nuns collecting money from Catholic school children in this country for missionary work (to convert the pagan babies) in underdeveloped countries. I identify with this book because as a Jew, it seems that I am always reading about my (that is, collective Jewish) mishegaas. Now I get to read about someone else's mishegaas of growing up Catholic in the South. It is a window, albeit a tiny one with a poor view, into another white ethnic neighborhood.

Janice goes to St. John Bosco Catholic School in small-town Texas. Clifford is the new kid, and she takes an immediate liking to him, which becomes obsessive/compulsive in short order. He, on the other hand is, yes, you guessed it, your stereotypical ambivalent bisexual. Luckily, there are some great sex scenes in the book. Janice offers herself to him when they are both fourteen years old. Repelled, he goes directly to the arms of the

school janitor, his first gay sexual experience. The hitch is that Clifford and the janitor get caught. Despite these scenes, neither characters nor plot is too memorable.

You have to keep reading for a while to get to the bisexual part — all the way to the end. But Janice, bless her heart, is determined to get her man. Unfortunately, I finished the book somewhat less satisfied than she was.



middle class world (Columbus, Ohio) awash in music and drugs. But like one of its main characters, Bobby, the novel gives up its life, retreats into psychological numbness (as though that was necessary for the book to survive). Bobby retreats into numbness to survive after the deaths, one after the other, of his revered brother, his lonely mother and finally his junior college professor father. At the beginning of high school he goes to live with the family of his best friend, Jonathan.

Bobby, in one of his only assertive acts in the entire book, reaches out to Jonathan and they become lovers, a relationship that lasts throughout high school. It ends when Jonathan goes off to New York to college, where after graduating and becoming established as a restaurant reviewer, he falls in love with Claire (with whom he never consummates a sexual relationship) and lives with her for several years. They talk of babies and living in the country. Years later, Bobby, gently bumped out of his torpor by Jonathan's mother (with whom he has lived all this time), shows up at Jonathan's apartment in the City.

The three take up residence in the tiny, two bedroom flat, and soon after that Bobby becomes lovers with Claire. Jonathan bolts in a fit of jealousy, while Claire and Bobby become an almost happy fucksome. There are subplots

involving Jonathan's mother and father, and a lover of Jonathan who ultimately, and it seems to me, gratuitously, dies of AIDS near the end of the book. These subplots add little more than pages to the story.

It was interesting to me that Cunningham has the trio reconcile their differences and decide to live together, have a baby, and buy a place in the country. However, it is there that their cozy little life falls apart; Jonathan's lover comes to die, raising all sorts of angst about Jonathan's health; Bobby and Claire grow distant, or recognize that they never were close; and Claire, on the pretext of going to the grocery store, takes off for California with the baby, leaving the boys to figure it out.

In Marge Piercy's *Summer People* the characters are paper thin, with motivations that strain credulity. In this story we are introduced to a long established threesome: Willie, Susan and Dinah. Willie is a contractor and is business partners with his grown son. Susan and Dinah are both artists, one a clothing designer and the other a musician and composer. The three are all lovers with each other and live year-round in two adjacent houses on adjoining properties on Cape Cod. Willie and Susan were a couple before Dinah became lovers first with Susan then Tom.

The story chronicles approximately a year in their lives. Domestic tensions, money problems, entanglements with the summer residents, and the seemingly senseless death of Susan eventually pull this not-too-happy family apart.

Piercy seems to have genuinely disliked the character of Susan. She made her shallow, vacuous, and vicious. Susan doesn't come across simply as a troubled person, but as a character the author tried to avoid. Dinah, on the other hand, is multi-faceted and thoughtful in her responses to people and situations. What complicates the story is that Susan is so shallow that I have a difficult time imagining why her other lovers are in a relationship with her. We certainly need more examples of three-way relationships, better still if they eschew monosexuality. But damn, why bother with a bisexual character in a multi-adult relationship who is petty, dishonest, manipulative, and in the end forfeits her life?

Photo: Jim Frazee

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



By contrast, Piercy beautifully structures and tells two highly interesting stories in *He, She and It*. In the primary story, the setting is a post apocalyptic 21st century, totally polluted North American continent. It centers on several of the residents of a democratic free town, a Jewish community named Tikva. In the primary plot the main character Shira

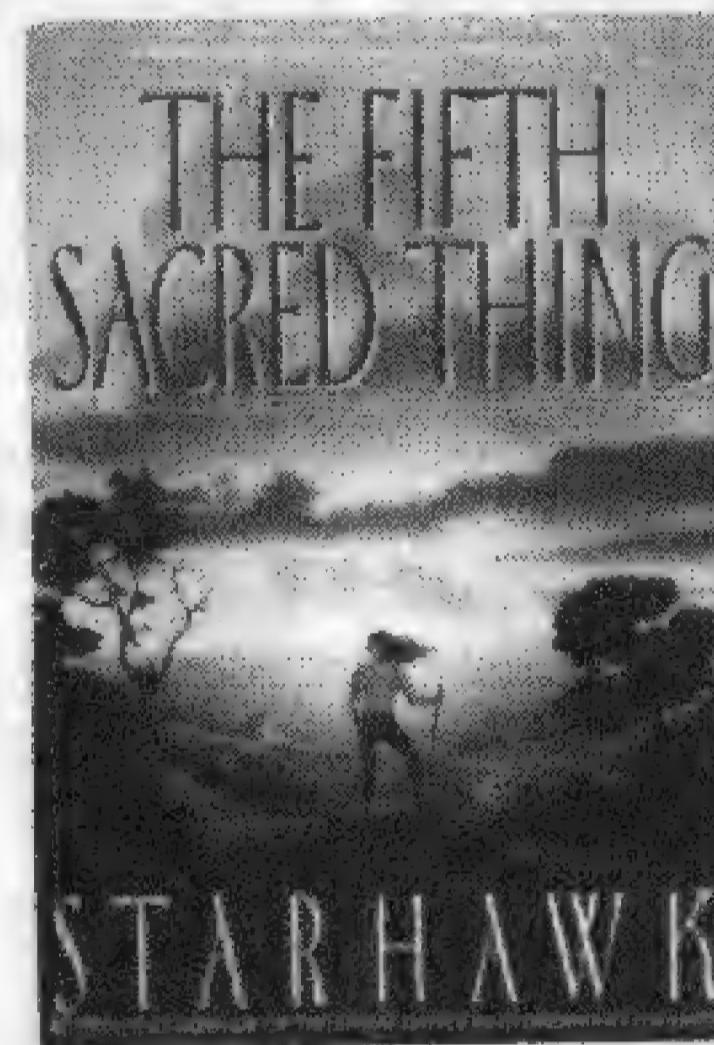
regains her kidnapped child from her estranged company-man husband as well as meaning in her life, with the help of a cyborg named Yod (rhymes with "wood") who eventually becomes her lover. Yod, the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, is the tenth and most successful attempt in this model of cyborg. Yod was illegally created by Avram and Malkah, unbeknownst to the other residents of Tikva, as a weapon to defend their tiny enclave.

Yod becomes the object of an espionage effort on the part of a corporate conglomerate, Y-S (Yakamura-Stichen), for which Shira once worked. The cyborg is illegal because of its level of capability. It can reason and perform many tasks like a human and in some cases better than a human. Moreover, Malkah, Shira's grandmother, has programmed Yod to have feelings. It is this conundrum which gives the story so much zest: what happens when humans create a thinking life form and have a difficult time answering its questions? What happens when humans create a sensate life form and then try to teach it what sensations mean? I thoroughly enjoyed how Piercy depicts the way this group of 21st century Jews deals with this kind of a problem.

Read on about revolution and class warfare, assimilation, the meaning of consciousness, the perseverance of heart and soul in the most toxic of environments. Integrated into the novel's structure is the second story — an allegory told to Yod as a part of his education. This allegory reads like a fable and morality tale, but is also about the ancestors of Shira, her lesbian mother Riva, and Malkah, who lived in 15th century Prague. In the allegory a Rabbi, out desperation for the safety of his community, creates from clay a Golem (an enormously strong creature in the shape of a man) named Joseph to protect the

Jewish ghetto from the wanton and vicious attacks of the surrounding community at the time of Passover.

The story of the creation and training of the Golem and of its consciousness and awakening directly parallels the creation and training of Yod. But in an ironic twist the cyborg and the golem, whose creation raises questions about the adherence of their respective creators to the ethical codes of their respective communities, actually bring life to their trustees.



An alternative vision of the 21st century brilliantly flows before us in Starhawk's first novel, *The Fifth Sacred Thing*. Earth, air, fire, and water are the four sacred things in this culture which has turned San Francisco into a paradise where no one goes naked (for lack of clothes) and

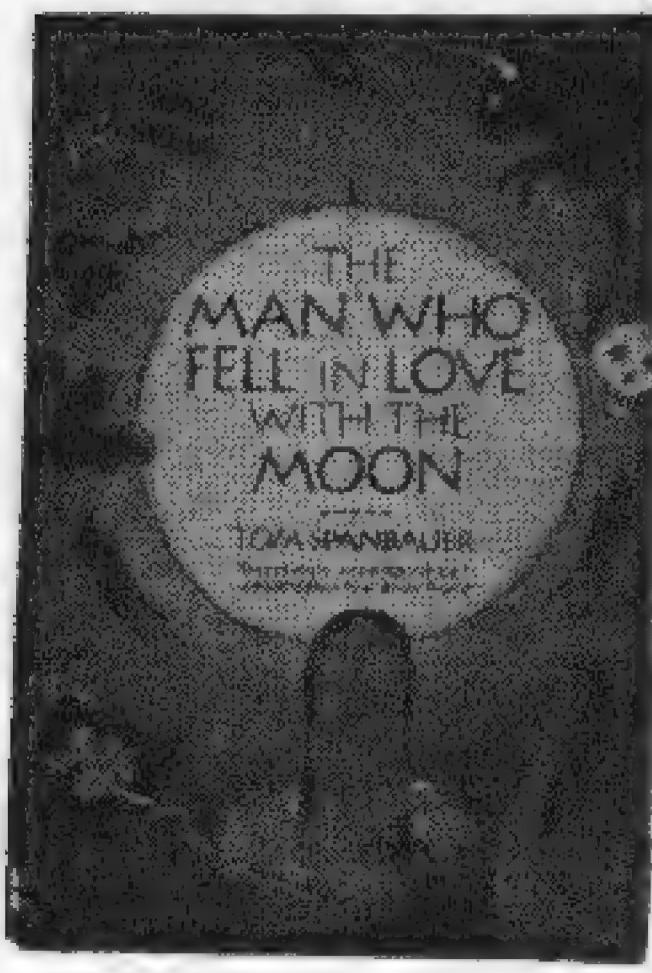
no one goes hungry for lack of food.

Cultures and races have melded in ways that have erased age-old animosities while preserving the essence of each. Sexual identities have also ceased to exist because there are no "power-over" politics. All of the central characters are bisexual in their behavior. People relate sexually however they want with whomever they want. Children and elders are respected and cared for. Decisions are made by consensus because everyone has been taught the nature of the four sacred things and has agreed to preserve and revere them, not profit from them.

The fifth sacred thing is spirit. This is a society that remembers its past. Many wounds of the past have been healed. But all is not well.

People are dying and the healers can't figure out why. Some people think the militaristic society from the South has initiated some kind of viral warfare. In an impetuous gesture, Bird goes south, gets captured and disappears for ten years. He is a wounded creature — physically and spiritually — determined to heal and help his people. Bird finds his way back on foot to his family and lovers, bringing news of an impending invasion.

Madrone (one of the most powerful healers in the community and one of Bird's lovers) realizing that she must go South, again on foot, retraces Bird's steps on a reconnaissance mission to gather more complete data and to make contact with the resistance forces. When she makes contact with the resistance, she finds they desperately need her healing powers. She also finds that her culture clashes with that of her resistance friends, and the clashes almost undo her work. Many readers will deeply identify with Madrone. She is filled with doubt but also with a compassion, pluck and spirit that pull her through many harrowing situations. She embodies the near-healed society of the North as she changes and adapts to her environment in a way that reveals not only a deep intelligence but a vital spirituality as well.



qualities that may not be equally perceived by different people. Reality is not always in one's perception.

Shed, calling himself an Indian, narrates the story. He learns that, over time, life is very dynamic and that those who do not change will have change forced upon them. Shed (so named because he lives in a shed — behind the whore house) opens the story as a prepubescent youth. We meet Ida Richilieu, Jew, mayor of Excellent, proprietor and head madam of the Indian Head Hotel, a bright pink whore house, who has raised Shed and taught him the trade. Shed had serviced only men until the beautiful Alma Hatch came along. Former bible saleswoman, one of the most popular prostitutes this side of the Mississippi River, she is fourteen-year-old Shed's lover for a brief but intense period. She then becomes lovers with Ida while servicing all manner of Ida's male clients.

My clear favorite of this entire batch is *The Man Who Fell in Love with the Moon*. This coming of age story starts and ends in Excellent, Idaho. One of the themes of the story is that there are many names for a person, place or a thing. The various names reveal differing

Meet Dellwood Barker, the man who fell in love with the moon who, at one point Shed believes, failed to tell him a vital secret. He is white, but is a berdache who introduces Shed to the mysteries of berdache, his own unique philosophy of the moon in its phases, and the sacred spirit in the land.

The book is set in the near-pristine splendor of turn-of-the-century Idaho. It has some of the most picaresque and vivid characters ever to come out of late 19th century Western U. S. literature. And because Spanbauer has the luck, or privilege, to be writing in the late 20th century, we get characters with a sexual authenticity that could only be hinted at when Mark Twain was writing. The characters also have the psychological integrity of a Franny and Zooey or of Holden Caulfield from *Catcher in the Rye*.

Along the way there are gruesome and wonderful lessons — the power of sex to heal (tantra in the wild West?), frostbite and a double amputation below the knees, murder, rape, fire, racism and all manner of chicanery. Also there is love, music, magic, integrity, and the connectedness of all things. All of the above combines to produce the best novel I have read in years. Spanbauer seems to have come out of nowhere with this quite literary, earthy, and unusual novel. Even if he produces nothing more, this book will preserve him a place in twentieth century literature.

From these novels — the good and the bad — we can see that bisexuals and their families are here to stay. All of these writers have created families that are not conventional, and, in doing so, they are expanding the definition of family and who gets to participate in one. While a large part of the media debate about what constitutes a family and what precisely "family values" are has been ceded to certain orthodoxies and fundamentalist groups, the literary discussion (at least where it meets "deviant" sexual behavior) has been expanding at a rapid clip. And to paraphrase Starhawk, the moral ground, the spiritual ground, is not theirs alone.

Missing those great back issues of Anything That Moves? Don't be dismayed — see page 17!



photo: Jim Frahn

# Rocky Horror Schoolgirl

by Sarah Pemberton Strong

The first time I ever saw *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* I was twelve years old and on a field trip with my eighth grade class. Really. It was our teacher's idea to take us. This was alternative school in Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1980; we all had hippie parents and Carter was still president. Besides, *Rocky Horror* was a relatively new happening at the time and our parents didn't know what it was about. Neither did we.

Just before midnight on a Friday evening in October, I stood with the rest of the kids on the sidewalk outside the Exeter Street theater, shivering in a black velvet cape whose purple silk lining had rotted away. We had put on costumes and painted our faces. We were all equipped with shopping bags filled with toast, rice, newspapers, squirt guns, sunglasses and toilet paper — the day before, in school, our teacher had passed out mimeographed lists of what to bring. Surrounded by adults, we tugged at our costumes and poked each other, giggling at the novelty of being out so late, waiting for the doors to open.

At twelve, I was not totally naive. I'd spent a summer in Provincetown and seen drag queens pushing baby carriages down Commercial Street. I had found *The Joy of Sex* under my parents' bed and read it. The teacher who

had organized this educational experience was a gay activist who on the second week of school had come out to the whole class. But sex and sexuality were still something for other people; something to be curious about from a distance. In other words, I was over the Brady Bunch but I had never been kissed. Sex was not yet a participatory experience. It was not yet mine.

We went into the theater. At first it was like a food fight; some stupid people got married and we threw rice, then there was a rainstorm and we all squirted our squirt guns. A bunch of people in sunglasses and tuxedos danced and we stood up and danced too. Good clean fun.

And then Tim Curry walked on.

Six feet of smooth body poured into a black satin merry widow and fishnet stockings. Those huge eyes with eye makeup for days and those buff shoulders. Lips begging to be bitten. That mane of hair. He was HOT. I was hot — oh my God! I bit my knuckles. I had to cross my legs. I couldn't take my eyes off the screen, not even when someone in the balcony threw a cold frankfurter down my back, and during the scene when Dr Frank N Furter goes down on Janet and then on Brad, something inside me fell off the shelf of childhood and broke open. Tim Curry's head went down, Brad's legs went up, and

my life was altered for good and I knew it and I was terrified.

Tim Curry?! Tim Curry?! When you're a twelve year old girl in 1980 you're supposed to have a crush on Shaun Cassidy or Parker Stevenson. There I was in spasms over a transvestite mad scientist in spike heels who brandishes a whip and fucks boys, girls, and space aliens. What was happening to me? For the rest of the film I sat there in quiet panic. It was exactly the same feeling I had a few years later when I made out with a girl for the first time. It was the panic of knowing there was no going back before I had acquired the knowledge that that was a good thing.

I couldn't deal. I blocked it out.

Years later, little by little, I unblocked it. I moved to San Francisco, came out a few times (bi, dyke, bi), fucked girls, fucked boys, and did it in fishnets and in handcuffs, with strap-ons and peeled bananas and blindfolds. I learned to love the smell of latex in the morning. And I was under the impression that I'd acquired all these tastes in San Francisco. I'd forgotten all about *Rocky Horror*.

Thirteen years later, age twenty-five, I'm visiting Boston over the holidays. I'm sitting in my mom's living room with a childhood friend I've known since seventh grade. It's late in the evening the day after

# Supermodel of the World/RuPaul

Tommy Boy Records

I'm in love with a big, beautiful, African-American drag queen. No, I'm not coming out to you about my love life. I'm talking about RuPaul. Released earlier this year (1993), RuPaul's *Supermodel of the World* is a glorious celebration of dance music mixing '70s disco and soul with '90s shouts and fashion. With guest stars ranging from Fred Schneider of The B-52s to LaWanda Page (Aunt Esther from *Sanford and Son*) to those imported divas that always give me goosebumps, the combination of classic dance music with fierce and fun lyrics produces a truly inspired experience that speaks to that sophisticated drag queen in everybody.

When you listen to this disc you better have room to dance. The two campiest

tracks (the title track and *Back to my Roots*) just get all over you and tell you to work it, girl. Both are heart-felt tributes, *Supermodel* to the world of working those runways of high fashion modeling and *Roots* to



Elias Farajajé-Jones and RuPaul. Photo courtesy of Lorraine Hutchins.

Ms. Paul's momma, her hair salon, and Atlanta. The rest of the disc is an exercise in showing the true flexibility in Ms. Paul's talent. Funkified soul fans will love *Miss Lady DJ* and *Stinky Dinky*, a remix of The Ohio Players' *Love*

*Rollercoaster* and probably the only song I've ever heard that rhymes "Englebert Humperdinck". *Free Your Mind*, *House of Love*, *Thinkin' bout You*, *Prisoner of Love*, and *All of a Sudden* are all classic soul songs which could easily have been part of a set sung by Teddy Pendergrass, Luther Vandross, or Lou Rawls. *Supernatural* and *Everybody Dance* tug at you to remember days of oil embargoes and '70s hits like *TSOP*, the *Theme from Shaft*, or *Sexual Healing*. *A Shade Shady* closes out this collection on a modern tip with a ripping rave beat.

Give RuPaul her props. What more can I say except, "Buy this! It's just so much fun!" Well, maybe "Peace, love and hair grease" or just "Work it, girl!"

## ROCKY HORROR

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE  
Christmas and we're bored. We don't want to go to a bar and it's too late to do anything else. Then Brooke says she thinks there's a midnight showing of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* in Harvard Square. What about that? *Rocky Horror*? Haven't seen it since I saw it with her. Haven't thought about it in years. "I'll get the rice," says

Brooke, "You make the toast." And we're off. We ransack my younger brother's room for a squirt gun. We steal a roll of t.p. from the bathroom, grab a couple of old newspapers and head for the Square.

The theater is small but full. Most of the crowd looks suspiciously suburban and there's not a costume in sight. Down in front there is one group of teenagers with hair dyed colors not found in na-

ture, but they aren't dressed for the show; they always look that way.

The lights dim. The cast of the live revue saunters out and the actor playing Frank N Furter steps forward and cracks his whip. I shiver. (Yeah, with aaantici — you know.) But then he clears his throat and makes an announcement.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## ROCKY HORROR

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE

"We want you all to enjoy yourselves and yell at the screen and dance in the aisles, but I remind you that throwing things in the theater is not permitted."

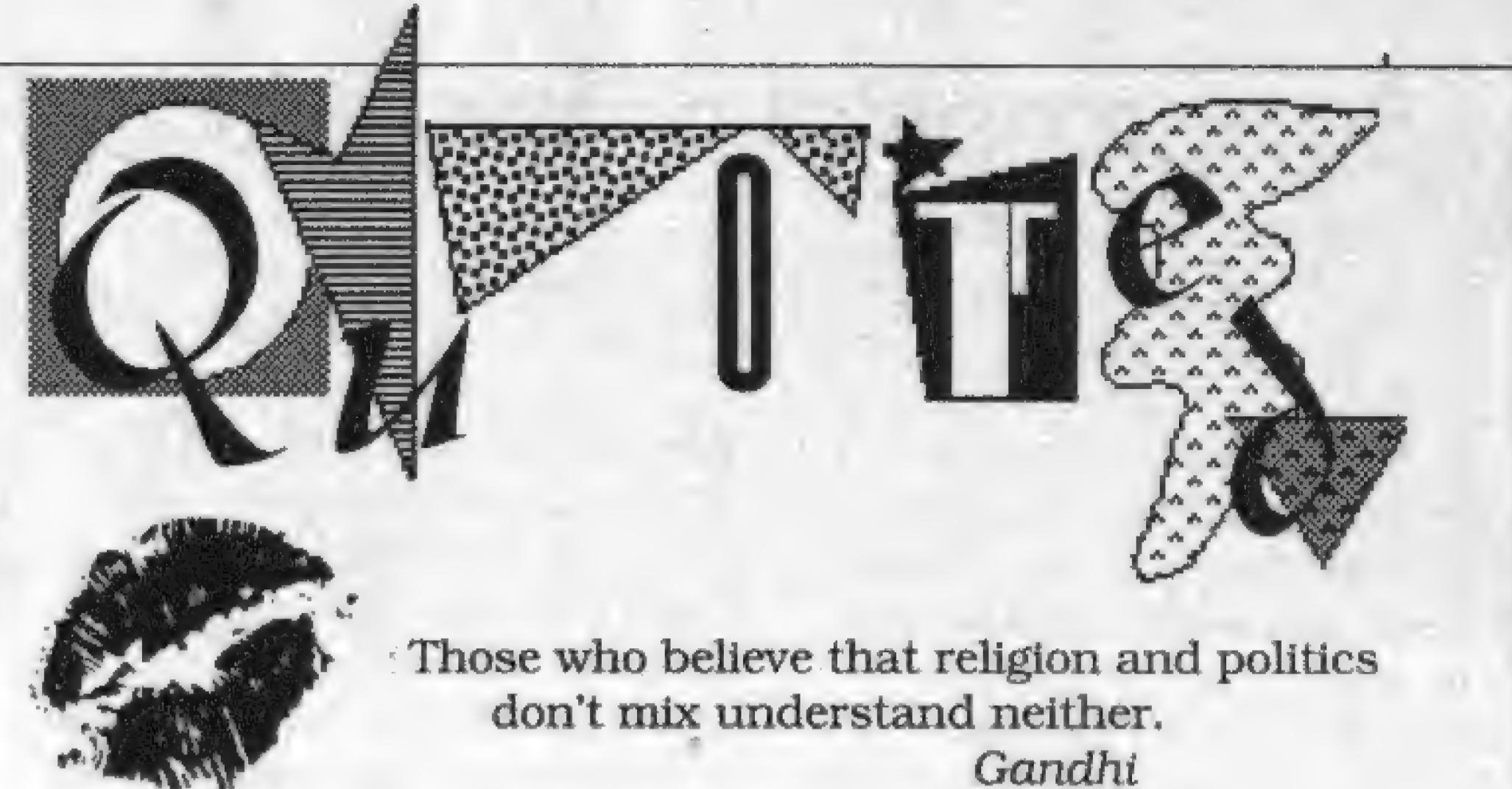
Whaar?

He struts a little and continues. "Do not throw toast, rice, toilet paper or anything else. It's too dangerous."

Dangerous? Brooke and I look at each other in disbelief. Unprotected sex is dangerous. Smoking crack is dangerous. Walking alone in my neighborhood at night is dangerous. But being hit with a piece of dry bread? This is *Rocky Horror*, you have to throw things. We look around the theater to see if anyone else is shocked and dismayed. No one is. Suddenly I feel old. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, like punk music and certain lesbian fashion wear, has entered the mainstream and lost its nasty edge. It's been made safe.

To make matters worse, we discover once the movie starts that the theater has ordered their ushers to stand in the aisles and yell at the screen unfunny retorts of their own invention, just to get things going. Fortunately, none of this succeeds in wrecking the movie. The movie is that good. It's still funny; it's still nasty, the music is still great and the audience ignores the goons in the aisles and yells the real stuff and I sit there and soak it all in twice — once as the adult I am now, once as that sweet and gangly twelve-year-old on the threshold of sexual awakening.

"Come in," says Riff Raff.



Those who believe that religion and politics don't mix understand neither.

Gandhi

The Bible contains six admonishments to homosexuals and 362 admonishments to heterosexuals. That doesn't mean that God doesn't love heterosexuals. It's just that they need more supervision.

Lynn Lavner

I regret to say that we of the FBI are powerless to act in cases of oral-genital intimacy, unless it has in some way obstructed interstate commerce.

J. Edgar Hoover

The pledge of allegiance says, "... with liberty and justice for all." What part of "all" don't you understand?

-Rep. Patricia Schroeder, D-Colorado

I'm for truth, no matter who tells it  
I'm for justice, no matter who it is for or against  
I'm a human being first and foremost, and as such,  
I am for who ever ... and whatever benefits humanity as a whole.

Malcolm X

Darling, you're divine. I've had an affair with your husband.  
You'll be next.

Tallulah Bankhead, to Joan Crawford, married  
at the time to Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.

Sex between a man and a woman can be a beautiful thing,  
provided you're between the right man and the right woman.

Woody Allen

"You're wet."

Yeah.

When it's all over I've decided three things: First, despite the theater's best attempts to wreck the experience, for my money, Tim Curry is still the hottest genderfuck on celluloid.

Second, it's too bad Susan Sarandon didn't have a scene in butch drag; I might have

come out that much sooner.

And last, thank God I now live in San Francisco, which is probably as close to Transsexual, Transylvania as you can get without leaving the planet.

Sarah Pemberton Strong is finishing a novel, *Burning The Seed*. She also works as an ASL-interpreter for deaf children in public school.

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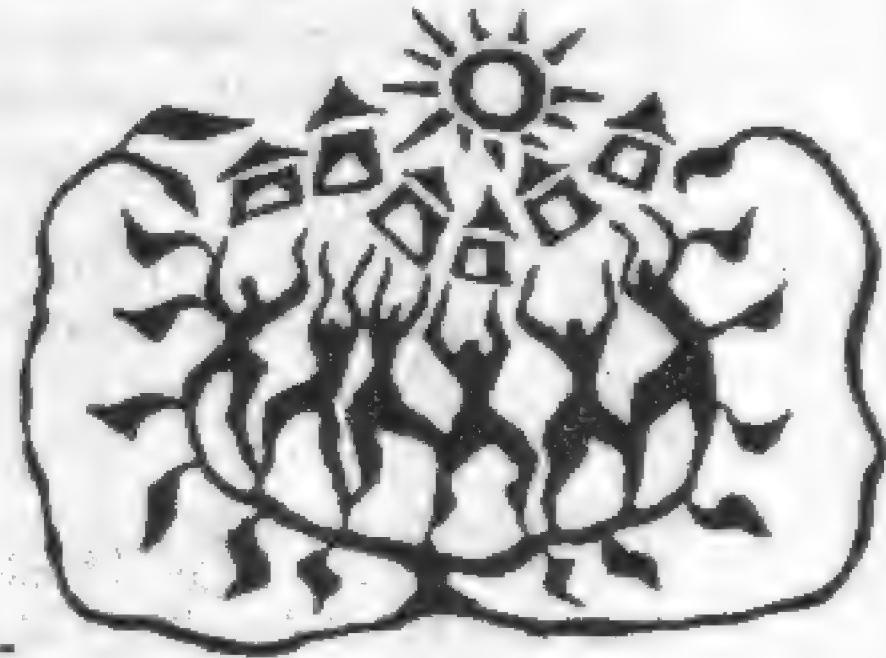
## Maggi Rubenstein

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**SWW sez: Don't sweat the petty things, pet the sweaty things.**

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# Bi Community & Resources

## Mixed

**Bay Area Bisexual Network:** Forum 3rd Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m. at the Women's Bldg. 3543 18th Street, SF. Topics of interest to members of the bi community and their friends. BABN also sponsors a speaker's bureau of bisexuals from diverse backgrounds, races, lifestyles and cultures who speak on all topics and issues concerning bisexuality. Call 415/703-7977 voice mail box #1, or write BABN at 2404 California St. #24, SF, CA 94115.

**Bi-Friendly San Francisco:** Every Monday, 7:30 p.m. Join bisexual men and women at a SF cafe for dinner and conversation. Call Pierre 415/648-6332. To subscribe to a calendar of bi social events around the Bay Area, send \$10 to Pierre Dufour at 2336 Market Street #130, SF 94111, 415/703-7977, voicemail box #4.

**Bi-Friendly East Bay:** Every Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. Join other bisexual women and men at a Berkeley cafe for dinner and conversation. Call Betsy 510/845-7441.

**Bi-Friendly of the Peninsula:** 2nd and 4th Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Join bisexual women and men for dinner and conversation at Vicolo Pizza, 473 University Ave., Palo Alto. Call Joyce 415/856-6901.

**BIPOL:** The Bay Area Bi/Gay/Lesbian political action group. Meets 3rd Monday of each month. Call 415-703-7977, voicemail box #2 or write 584 Castro #422, SF, CA 94114.

**Bisexual Group in Marin:** Bi social/support group meets 1st & 3rd Wednesdays of every month in central Marin. Interested men & women call Larry at 415/454-5638.

**Bi Women and Men Open Rap:** Every Sunday, 7-8:50 p.m. Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. Call 510/841-6224.

**Games Night:** Every Saturday, 6-9:45 p.m. at the Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. About 25-30 bis, gays and lesbians play cards, scrabble, etc., or watch videos. Call 510/841-6224.

**Lavender SIG:** A political & support network for fat bis, lesbians, gays & their allies. Part of NAAFA, a human rights organization. Send SASE to PO Box 210074, SF, CA 94121-0074.

**Mother Goose Productions:** Sponsors monthly Jack & Jill Off social gatherings for women, men, bi, gay, lesbian. Send SASE to PO Box 3212, Berkeley CA 94703.

**Sacramento Area Bisexual Network:** The purpose of this 100-member group is to educate, politicize, support one another, and socialize. They publish Bi Word of Mouth newsletter and do a bi radio show. Send SASE to PO Box 189146, Sacramento CA 95818, or call 916/863-3700.

**Sci-Fi Bis:** Group forming for Sci-Fi/Fantasy & Trekkie fans. Call Adrienne Davis 415/885-4648.

**Side by Side Sonoma:** Bisexual women and men meet in Sebastopol for discussion and support, 2nd Wednesday, 7:30-9:30. Social gathering for bi's and friends, 1st Saturday of each month. Call Pat or Chuck at 707/829-1415; or Colin at 707/823-2990.

**Society of Janus:** Educational programs, parties, newsletter, and mutual support for adults interested in consensual SM, BD, leather. Open to all sexual identities. Send SASE to PO Box 426794, SF, CA 94142-6794. Hotline: 415/985-7117.

There are more groups for women and men under the categories "Ethnic/Of Color" and "Parenting & Family".

There are TDD numbers for hearing-impaired bi's under the categories "Ethnic/Of Color", "Health", and "Student & Youth".

## Women

**Bay Area Bisexual Women's Network:** Offer support/discussion groups, sponsor workshops, and organize women only events and social activities. Newsletter listing events & support groups. To receive newsletter (\$5/yr) or list women's group or women's event, call 415/485-1015 (evenings only).

**Bisexual Women's Support Group:** 1st & 3rd Sundays, 7:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Church, Rm. 6, 505 E. Charleston, Palo Alto. Call 415/961-9590 or Susan at 415/493-0406.

**Bi Women's Group:** Bisexual and bi-curious women have monthly potlucks in Palo Alto for support and socializing. Call True 415/323-4227.

**East Bay Bi Women's Support Group:** meets on the fourth Thursday of each month. To learn more, call Renée, 510/841-2101.

**LABIA:** Lesbians and Bi Women in Alliance meet every Thursday, 7:30 p.m. in Berkeley. Call Judith 510/528-5331.

**San Francisco Bisexual Women's Support Group:** Meets on the 1st three

Wednesday evenings, 7-9pm and the last Sunday of each month, 5-7pm. Wednesdays at Amazing Grace on Church nr Market; Sundays at a woman's home (sometimes potluck). For info, call Ingrid at 415/775-2620. To confirm and get directions to Sunday grp, call Clare at 415/285-5932.

**Women's Bisexual Network of Santa Cruz & the Greater Monterey Bay Area:** Resource and referral service for bi women. Call 408/427-4556 (voice mail).

**Women's Coming Out Support Group:** Every Wednesday, 6-7:30 p.m. at the Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. Focuses on coming out to self, friends, family, workplace. All women welcome. Newcomers arrive at 5:45. Call 510/841-6224.

**Women's Spirituality Group:** Meets monthly in Marin. Open to lesbians, bisexual and heterosexual women. Call Spectrum Center for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Concerns: 415/457-1115.

**Women's Electronic Mail Networks:** ba.sappho for bi women and lesbians. BIFEM for bisexual women and transsexuals.

There are more groups for women under the categories "Ethnic/Of Color", "Student and Youth", and "Health".

## Men

**Bisexual Men's Therapy Group:** Focuses on relationship and communication issues. Call Ron Fox, M.S., MFCC at 415/751-6714. Fee.

**Gay Men's Rap Group:** Every Monday, 7:45-9:50 at the Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 75-100 gay and bisexual men gather together, then divide into discussion groups by topic. Call 510/841-6224.

**Married/Once Married Bi and Gay Men's Rap Group:** Every Wednesday, 8-9:50, Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. Call 510/841-6224.

**Men's Resource Hotline:** Listing of men's groups and resources dedicated to a positive change in male roles and relationships. Call Gordon at 415/453-2839.

**Move (Men Overcoming Violence):** Provides group and individual counseling for men who batter and community education on the issues of sexism, masculinity and male violence. Call 415/626-6683.

There are more groups for men under the categories "Ethnic/Of Color", "Student and Youth", and "Health".

## *ethnic / of color*

**AMASSI:** Provides support, affirmation and empowerment services to people of diverse sexual & ethnic backgrounds, emphasizing Afro-Americans. Provides individual & couples counseling, support groups, AIDS education and support, outreach and community training inside the Afro-American community. 3419 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Oakland CA 94609. Phone: 510/601-9066.

**Arab Bi/Lesbian/Gay Network:** Bi/lesbian/gay people of Arab heritage. Social, political, educational. Write PO Box 460526, SF, CA 94114.

**Asian Pacifica Sisters:** Community-based organization for lesbians and bisexual women of Asian heritage around the Bay Area. Sponsors social, political and cultural/educational events. Write APS, PO Box 170596, SF, CA 94117 to get on mailing list. Send \$3.50 to receive a copy of *Phoenix Rising* newsletter. New members contact Caroline 415/621-2982 or Young 510/465-7394.

**Asian Pacific Lesbian Network:** Lesbian and bisexual women of Asian heritage are meeting monthly to plan a retreat for this national network on the 3rd weekend in October, 1993. Call Yvette 415/653-6770 or Teresa 415/928-8885.

**Bi Men of Color Group:** Support and social. Call Kuwaza at 510/465-9671.

**Black Men's Exchange:** Every Friday, 8 p.m., 40-70 men of African-American heritage and diverse sexual expressions meet for social support and empowerment at AMASSI, 3419 Martin Luther King, Jr., Way, Oakland. A development committee meets separately to plan events (last year they addressed homophobia as an embarrassment to the Black community). Oakland chapter and national headquarters: 510/839-9138. Other chapters listed under the category "Bis Beyond the Bay".

**Brothers Loving Others Safely and Soundly:** Every Saturday, 7 p.m. at AMASSI, 3419 Martin Luther King, Jr., Way, Oakland. Men of diverse sexual and ethnic backgrounds (with an emphasis on Afro-Americans) meet for support around risk reduction in behavior (such as AIDS and domestic violence) and making positive choices around their rage. Food is served. Call AMASSI 510/601-9066.

**Gay Asian/Pacific Alliance (GAPA):** Bi/Gay men of Asian and Pacific Island heritage. Sponsor events and the GAPA men's chorus. Publish magazine *Lavender Godzilla: Voices of Gay & Bisexual Asian Pacific Men*. Write PO Box 421884, SF, CA 94142.

**GAPA Political Action/Awareness:** Call Bang Nguyen 415/552-8750.

**GAPARap:** Bi/gay Asian/Pacific Islander men's support group. Meets bi-monthly. Call 415/252-1163.

**Jewish Bisexual Caucus:** Discussion, support, social. Meets monthly. Call Jim 415/337-4566.

**Lavender Dragon Society:** New group where Chinese and Chinese-American gay and bisexual men get to be Chinese and queer at the same time. Call Daniel 415/992-2656.

**LYRIC (Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center):** Groups for young African-Americans. Many other groups. Se habla espanol; Nagsasalita kaming Tagalog. Call the hotline for schedule: 863-3636 in San Francisco; elsewhere 1/800/246-PRIDE. TDD# 415/431-8812. Also see the "Student & Youth" category.

**Sister Love:** Every Thursday, 7 p.m. at AMASSI, 3419 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Oakland. For women who love women. Diverse ethnic backgrounds and sexual identities; emphasizes Afro-Americans. Food is served. Call 510/601-9066.

**3 X 3: Bi People of Color Caucus:** Resource/support/political action/social group building coalitions for a bi community that empowers all people. Call Lani 415/703-7977, voicemail box #3.

There are more groups for men of color under the category "Health".

There is a group for people of color under the category "Transgendered".

## *transgendered*

**Educational TV Channel (ETVC):** Open, supportive gender group with over 400 members from 23 states and 3 foreign countries. Serves educational, social, support, and recreational needs of transvestites, transsexuals, and others whose social role differs from the role considered appropriate for their genetic sex. For info or newsletter write PO Box 6486, SF, CA 94101. Send \$2 for directory of support groups and computer bulletin boards.

**Rainbow Gender Association (RGA):** Meets 1st & 3rd Fridays of each month in San Jose. Write RGA, PO Box 700730, San Jose CA 95170.

**Transgendered Support Group:** Every Monday, 7 p.m., at AMASSI, 3419 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Oakland. For TGs of diverse ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientations; emphasizes Afro-Americans. Food is served. Call 510/601-9066.

**Transgender Youth Support Groups:** All support groups at LYRIC (Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center) are open to transgender youth. Call 415/863-3636 (outside San Francisco call 1-800/246-PRIDE). See individual group listings under the category "Student and Youth".

## *student & youth*

**Androgynous Bisexual Club (ABC):** Formed at Santa Rosa Junior College in April '93. Leave message at Student Activities Office, 707/527-4424.

**Bisexuals, Gays and Lesbians at Davis:** Social, educational and support. Write 433 Russell Blvd, Sacramento CA 95616.

**Coming Out Youth Group:** Meets at LYRIC (Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center), 3543 18th Street, 2nd floor, SF. Support group for gay, bi, lesbian, transgender, and questioning youth. Call hotline for schedule: 863-3636 in SF; 1-800/246-PRIDE elsewhere. TDD# 415/431-8812.

**Drop-In Group for Youth Under 18:** Every Thursday, 3:30-5 p.m. at LYRIC, 3543, 18th Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco. Support group for gay, bi, lesbian, transgender, and questioning youth. Call 863-3636 in San Francisco; elsewhere 1-800/246-PRIDE. TDD# 415/431-8812.

**T.R.U.B.L.** Come get into T.R.U.B.L.! Hang out and have fun with young (23 and under) bisexuals of all kinds. Guys and girls welcome. For info, call the LYRIC infoline at 415/863-3636 or outside SF, 1-800-246-7743.

**Gay and Lesbian Alliance (GALA):** Gay, lesbian and bi students at Santa Rosa Junior College provide peer support, educate others, serve on panels in sociology and psychology classes, sponsor parties, and provide good role models for relationships. GALA meets weekly September to May. Leave message at Student Activities Office 707/527-4424.

**Gay/Lesbian Alliance at Sonoma State (GLASS):** Leave message at Student Union 707/664-2382.

**Lesbian/Gay/Bi Alliance at SF State:** Support, events, newsletter. Write LGBA, Room 100A, Student Union Bldg, San Francisco State University, SF, CA 94132.

**Lesbian/Gay/Bi Alliance at San Jose State:** Social & Educational group at San Jose State University. 408/236-2002.

**The LYRIC bisexual group in San Francisco:** is a space for young women and men to meet with other bisexual or questioning youth 23 years of age or under. Youth socialize, talk, and hang-out with each other. Meets each Tuesday from 6:30 - 8:00 pm at the LYRIC office. For more information, call the Youth Talkline at 415/863-3636 or leave a message for Teresa at the LYRIC office 415/703-6150.

**Multicultural Bi/Lesbian/Gay Association (MBLGA) at UC Berkeley:** Call 510/642-6942.

**New Horizons:** Every Thursday, 7:45-9:30 pm at Spectrum, 1000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd, #12, San Anselmo. Support group for lesbian, gay, bi and question-

ing young adults, age 22-29. Call 415/457-1115.

**Rainbow's End:** Every Thursday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Spectrum, 1000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd, #12, San Anselmo. Support group for lesbian, gay, bi and questioning youth, age 14-23. Call 415/457-1115.

**23 or Under Group:** Every Saturday, 1:30-3 p.m. 40-60 gays, bis and lesbians through age 23 gather for support and discussion at the Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. Call 510/841-6224.

**Young Men's Group:** Every Friday, 7-9 p.m. at LYRIC, 3543 18th Street, 2nd floor, San Francisco. Support group for young men age 12-23 who are gay, bi, transgender, or questioning. Call 863-3636 in San Francisco; elsewhere 1-800/246-PRIDE, TDD# 415/431-8812.

**Young Women's Group:** Every Monday, 7-9 p.m. at LYRIC, 3543 18th Street, 2nd floor, San Francisco. Support group for young women age 12-23 who are lesbian, bi, transgender, or questioning. Call 863-3636 in SF; elsewhere 1-800/246-PRIDE, TDD# 415/431-8812.

There are also groups for youth listed under "Health" and "Transgendered".

## health + support

**AIDS Health Project:** Support group for gay and bi men who are HIV+. Support group for gay and bi men who are HIV negative. Structured 8-week groups meet at the agency; on-going groups meet in private homes. Call Carmen Chavez 415/476-3902.

**ARC/Early AIDS Group:** Every Thursday, 6-8 p.m. at Operation Concern, 1853 Market (at Guerrero), SF. Gay and bi men discuss the experience of living with the diagnosis. Led by a licensed counselor. Free. Drop-in; no appointment necessary. For info call 415/626-7000.

**Bay Positives:** A support group for young people who test positive. Call Julie Graham 415/386-4615.

**CURAS:** Prevention and education referral services for bi and gay Latino men. Call 415/255-2731.

**The Deaf Gay/Lesbian Center:** Serves the needs of deaf & hard-of-hearing members of the gay and lesbian community. Also offers American Sign Language classes to the hearing gay and lesbian community. Responsive to bisexual people. TDD# 415/885-2341. Hearing callers may call 1/800/735-2922 and ask to be connected to this TDD#.

**Filipino Task Force on AIDS:** 1540 Market Street #275, SF, CA 94102. 415/703-9880. Provides prevention and intervention case management, referrals, HIV prevention education, translation services. Serves people of all ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientations who are HIV infected, with a focus on Filipinos. A support group for HIV+ people and their

lovers meets in members' homes for potlucks; sometimes has speakers.

**GAPA HIV Project:** Emotional and practical support targeting bi and gay men of Asian/Pacific Islander heritage. Call Wayne Chan 415/568-4532.

**HIV+ Drop-In Group:** Every Thursday, 6-8 p.m. at Operation Concern, 1853 Market (at Guerrero), SF. Support, info, and discussion for gay and bi men who are HIV+. Led by a licensed counselor. Free. Wheelchair accessible. Call 415/626-7000.

**Living Well with AIDS/ARC:** Support group based on Attitudinal Healing Principles. Call 415/621-1701.

**Lyon Martin Clinic:** Primary health care for and by women, particularly bi and lesbian, in SF. Call 415/565-7667.

**LYRIC:** 3543 18th Street, Box 31, 2nd Floor, SF, CA 94110. Provides HIV prevention/education groups for youth. Call the hotline for schedule: 863-3636 in SF; elsewhere 1-800/246-PRIDE, TDD# 415/431-8812.

**Operation Concern:** Mental health concerns of bis, lesbians, and gay men. Individual and group counseling available. Call 415/626-7000.

**Spectrum Center for Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Concerns:** 1000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd #12, San Anselmo CA 94960. Provides spiritual and practical support to people with AIDS and HIV+. 415/457-1115.

**Substance Abuse Support Group:** Every Thursday, 7-8 p.m. at Operation Concern, 1853 Market (at Guerrero), SF. This drop-in group is free and offers information about OC's substance abuse program. Open to bis. On-going groups cost \$11-34 sliding scale, and members must also be in individual counseling. Call 415/626-7000.

**Women's AIDS Network (WAN):** Referral services for women with AIDS/HIV. Call 415/864-4376, ext. 2007.

## parenting + family

**IntNet Resource Center:** Supports loving, committed, ethical multi-partner relationships. Sponsors workshops and ongoing groups for responsible nonmonogamists, offers speakers bureau, and publishes a quarterly newsletter for members. All sexual preferences welcome. Info packet: POB 4322-AA, San Rafael, CA 94913-4322, 415/507-1739.

**Lesbian/Gay/Bi Parents Group:** Meets monthly in different homes in Marin. For info call Spectrum, 415/457-1115.

**Park Hop Doo Wop:** Social group/extended family for bi, lesbian, gay, and hip hetero parents of children 12 and under. Info: 415/637-9125.

**PEP:** National member network for people seeking polyfidelitous relationships. Focuses on group marriage and multiple

adult, committed relationships. Newsletter includes ads, education and info. Call Ryam at 808/929-9691 (Hawaii).

## new groups

**BREATHE – Bisexual Revolutionaries Engaged in Art to Heal the Earth.** Performance/Play group starting—must be bisexual, radically bi-positive, or both. Explore/explode the dichotomy of overtly political art versus art that is non-dogmatic and free. Emphasis on support, consensus and encouragement, doing things we've never done before, speaking our own truths, ensemble work, and creating power from within. A safe space for us to radically risk. All cultures, races, genders, etc. "encouraged to apply." Call Ian at 415/550-1368, or 415/648-9139.

## HIV support groups for the bisexual community

Possible groups could include bisexual men and/or women who are HIV+, negative partners of positive individuals, and perhaps a couples support group. We may also form a group for people in the "kink" (SM/sex parties, etc) communities who may find the usual HIV groups too judgemental for mutual support.

Contact Brian Young, 415-221-3360.

**Bay Area Visual Artist Critique Group** - Meeting to share and critique each other's artwork. Call Claude, 415/821-7282 for information.

## bis beyond the bay

**BiNet USA:** This umbrella network of bi groups and individuals in the U.S. formed at the 1990 National Bisexual Conference. Its address recently changed to the east coast: PO Box 7327, Langley Park, MD 20787. Phone: 202/986-7186.

**Black Men's Exchange:** African-American men of diverse sexual expressions meet for social support & empowerment.

- Oakland headquarters: 510/839-9138
- Atlanta: 404/627-5148
- Denver: 303/837-1530
- Detroit: 313/361-6037
- Los Angeles: 310/281-7742
- Philadelphia: 215/848-4892
- Sacramento: 916/487-0439

**International Directory of Bisexual Groups:** Comprehensive listing of bi groups all over the world, including the U.S. Updated bi-annually. Send \$5.00 (or \$6.50 in U.S. currency if outside the U.S.) to: ECBN, POB 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

MORE "B/S BEYOND THE BAY" — SEE PAGE 63

Anything That Moves

# Classifieds

## volunteers

**Volunteers Needed!** Anything that **Moves** is staffed by volunteers. We may have volunteer opportunities for you in the following areas:

- Computer input & layout
- Promotion
- Department Editors
- Writing articles and reviews
- News Editor
- Correspondence

It's easy to jump in and a great way to plug into the bi community. Call 415-703-7977, voicemail box #1.

**The Bay Area Bisexual Network Speakers Bureau** is currently interviewing for (two) co-coordinator positions. Join our volunteer activist staff two to three hours per week, working together, setting up speaking engagements, training, outreach, some fund raising. Related or direct experience preferred. This is a unique opportunity to increase the visibility of the diversity (class, race, ethnicity, gender, spirituality etc.) of Bisexuals in the Bay Area.

For questions and more information, leave a message at the BABN voice mail number: 415-703-7977, VM box #1.

## for sale

**STOP! This is insulting to Bisexual People** stickers. Handy for leaving your message when you happen across bi oppression. 5 for \$1.00.

1 1/4" **Bisexual Pride!** buttons. \$1.00 each plus .50 handling. **BiPhobia Shield** \$.75 each or 2 for \$1.00.

**Bisexual Pride!** T-shirts in black or white. \$12 plus \$2.00 postage and handling. Indicate color and size.

**BiPhobia Shield** \$.75 each or 2 for \$1.00.

Order above from BABN 2404 California St #24, SF, CA 94115.

## work

**ATM Ad Sales position available.** Support the cause and make money at the same time! Payment on commission. Call 415/703-7977 to apply.

## publications

**Bay Area Progressive Directory & Calendar:** The latest listing of progressive groups, organizations and events encompassing environmentalism, human & animal rights, civil rights, political actions, etc. Write: POB 11232, Berkeley, CA 94701-2232 or call 510/848-9862, ext. 3.

**Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out:** Edited by Lorraine Hutchins & Lani Kaahumanu, Alyson Publications, 40 Plympton St., Boston, MA 02118. Seventy bisexual women & men describe their lives as well as essays by the editors. \$13.00 ppd.

## call for entries

**TransSisters: The Journal of Transsexual Feminism:** Submissions by transsexual womyn who have experienced discrimination and/or harassment within the lesbian/feminist community are now being sought for an anthology of personal accounts of such experiences. Manuscripts should be sent to: Davina Anne Gabriel, 4004 Troost Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri 64110.

**Spirit Maps:** To everyone whose life has been affected by HIV. What have you learned about life lately? We are interested in knowing your responses to this question. You are welcome to answer as often as you like. All responses will be exhibited (anonymous, if you wish, and completely uncensored) as part of a major installation by artists Phillip Blackburn and Donald Engstrom to be shown at Intermedia Arts Gallery, Minnesota, in June 1994. Trace your hand, cut out the shape, and inscribe your response. Mail it by May 21, 1994 to Spirit Maps, P.O. Box 80788, Mpls, MN 55408-8788, 612/825-5532 and leave your response as a voice message. E-mail: [klin0051@student.tc.umn.edu](mailto:klin0051@student.tc.umn.edu) or use GayNet.

## counseling

**Supportive Counseling & Hypnotherapy.** Caring, non-judgemental bisexual therapist. Explore intimacy, monogamy vs. non-monogamy, codependency, childhood abuse, family dysfunction, grief, self-esteem, women's issues. Individuals, groups, couples, families. Sliding scale, some insurance accepted. East Bay. Beila Krow, MFCC, 510-527-4024.

## information

**Coming Together News:** National bi-monthly publication for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing signing lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. Soon to go international. Available at A Different Light, Mama Bears, and Lambda Bookstore, or write CTN, Box 5669, Berkeley 94705-0669.

**Community United Against Violence (CUAV):** Crisis counseling and legal referral for victims of anti-lesbian, -bi and -gay violence and domestic violence. Call 415/864-3112 for info.

**Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention (LAGAI):** LAGAI offers assistance to dykes, fags, and bis who are considering the military or who are in and want to get out. We say: Ban the Military. Not the Queers. For info or to work on this project, call Kate 415/641-8769.

**San Francisco Sex Information (SFSI):** Free information and referral switchboard. A non-profit educational community service for all ages & lifestyles. Mon-Fri 3-9 p.m. 415/621-7300.

## bis beyond the bay

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 62

**Unitarian Universalist Bisexual Network:** A packet of materials of interest to bisexuals, including a newsletter, is available from the Unitarian Church by sending \$10 to UUBN, POB 10818, Portland, ME 04104.

**Vancouver Bis BiFace,** a mixed gender bi social and support group, meets first and third Tuesdays, 7:30-10:30pm. For info, call the BiLine at 604/681-8815. Someone answers the line personally Mondays, 8-10pm.

## how to place an ad

\$10.00 for classified ads up to 40 words.

\$.25 each additional word

\$1.00 each bold word (headline only; up to 5 words per headline)

10% discount for four issue placement.

Post Office Boxes, abbreviations, initials, phone numbers, and zip codes each count as one word. Hyphenated words count as two. Sorry, no personal ads accepted. All ads must be prepaid.

Ads must be accompanied by your name and phone number in case of problems.

SEND COPY AND CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO BABN TO: ATM, 2404 California St #24, SF, CA 94115.

Nonprofit announcements are free (space permitting).

# HIV & Folks Like You

by Cianna Stewart

So there's this thing out there called HIV, and while it seems like it's everywhere, you can actually track its path, and stop it before it gets to you. Really.

## Who Me?

HIV has no biases for or against a group of people. It does however, have a particular fondness for bodily fluids which have a high level of white blood cells, and for activities which transmit those fluids from one person to another. It therefore affects all people doing certain "unsafe" activites, regardless of sexual identity, gender, age, race, ability, class, or regional location.

Yes. You.

## "Bodily Fluids"?

HIV lives in white blood cells. Fluids with a high concentration of white blood cells are blood, semen, vaginal fluids (i.e. cum, discharge, ejaculate, etc.). HIV has been found in breast milk, not in high levels, but still definitely present. Menstrual blood contains regular blood, and could easily transmit HIV. Saliva, tears, and sweat have such low traces of white blood cells that you'd have to drink gallons to put yourself seriously at risk. Urine is sterile and does not transmit HIV. Feces, however, often have blood in them and are therefore unsafe.

## "Unsafe Activities"?

A short (and incomplete) list of activites which are potentially unsafe when engaged in without the use of a

barrier:

- Intercourse between a man and a woman or between two men
- Anal finger play or fisting
- Vaginal finger play or fisting
- Oral sex on a man or woman
- Sharing any part of a rig used for injection drugs
- Cuttings or play piercing
- Flogging or whipping until blood is drawn
- Kissing while there are open sores on the mouth.

## Safer Injecting

Injection drug use is responsible for a higher percentage of new HIV infections than any other activity. This is especially true in urban areas, and for women. While many people think of addicts when hearing about needle use, the number of people who use drugs recreationally at dance clubs and parties is growing, and many of them are sharing their works.

Bleach will kill HIV, but only if it stays in the rig for at least 30 seconds. Drawing up alternately water and bleach at least 5 times, will usually fill this time minimum.

The most effective way to stay safe if you inject drugs either recreationally or regularly is to own your own rig, and not to share needles, syringes, cottons, cookers, or water with anyone else. Having works doesn't mean you're addicted, just that you care about staying alive.

## Safer Sex

**Gloves:** For all "digital play" (i.e. using your fingers in someone's vagina or anus)

wear a latex glove, and use lots of lube. Gloves can be cut open by removing the fingers and thumb and cutting open one side to give you a nice, large, stretchy, piece of latex for oral sex on women or for rimming.

*I love gloves because they make everything smoother, silkier. They are a fashion statement, especially when you coordinate the colored ones with your outfit.*

## Tips/ideas:

- You can get boxes of gloves at beauty supply houses.
- If you're sensitive to the powder on gloves (or on any latex), prerinse them in water, then let them dry. They'll be all ready to use when the occasion arises.
- If you'll be changing orifices mid-play (e.g. anus to vagina, one butt to another, etc.), put on two gloves at the beginning. Then, when you want to switch, just take one off, and you're ready.
- Try lube on the inside of the glove. You'll feel more, and the glove seems thinner.

There's oh so much more to tell you... but that's all I have room for now.

Play a lot. Play safe. Have a good time.

Wake up. Take some responsibility. Stay healthy.

Learn to talk about sex and to ask for what you want. Sex gets better if you do. Now isn't that an excellent side effect from having safer sex?

**Next issue: more sex, safely & fun.**

Cianna Stewart works as a Peer Safer Sex Slut with Lyon-Martin Women's Health Services in San Francisco. She swears that she's never enjoyed sex as much as she does now.

*Anything That Moves*

# ANYTHING THAT MOVES

## CHAPTER THREE

by:  
Roberta Gregory

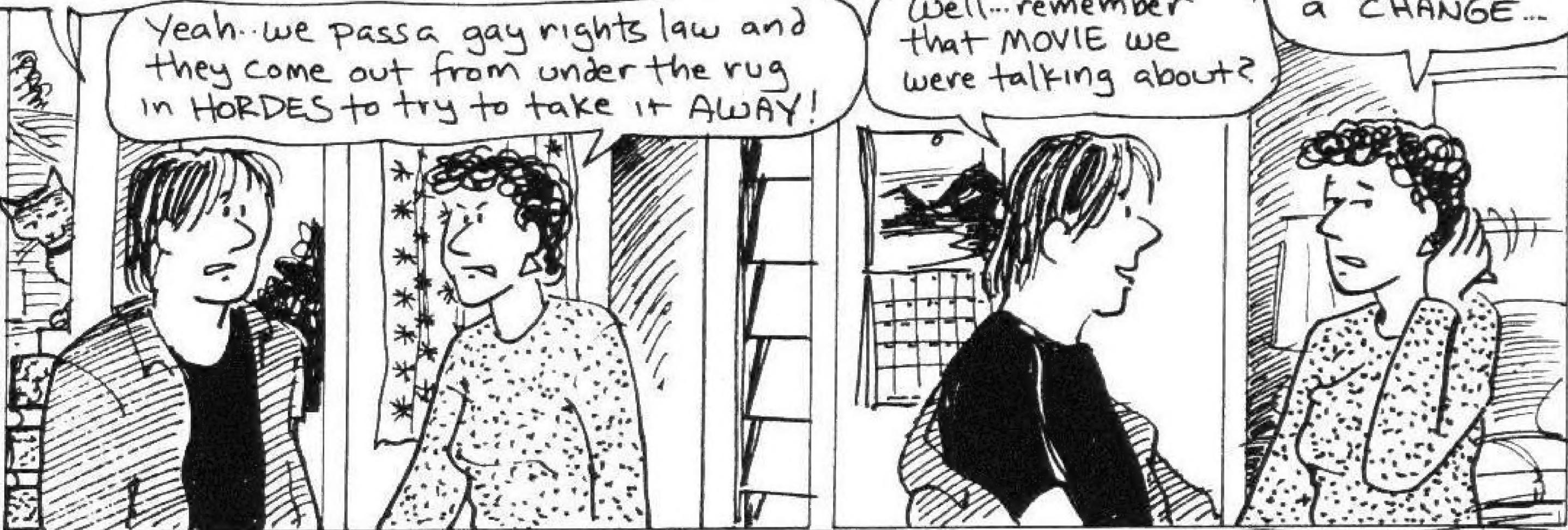
Jeez.. I saw some of those right-wingers behind Initiative 16 on TV last night... --- what a SCARY crowd!

You got your HAIR cut... looks nice!

Yeah.. I was sort of in the mood for a CHANGE...

Yeah.. we pass a gay rights law and they come out from under the rug in HORDES to try to take it AWAY!

Well...remember that MOVIE we were talking about?



Maybe this afternoon we could...

oh, Bob, I CAN'T! Shonda's car broke down and I volunteered to drive them to the "No on 16" rally today....

Well.. TOMORROW I've signed up to staff our info table in front of the library where the "Sixteeners" are showing that awful propaganda film of theirs...

...and on TUESDAY I'm going to help gather signatures for the gay rights initiative and then on WEDNESDAY there's the envelope-stuffing party over at Diana's....

oh... Maybe tomorrow night....?

Then on THURSDAY State Rep Joanne Neumeyer is meeting with the "No on 16" Committee, and I volunteered to write up a report for the NEWSLETTER....

-- which means I'll have to be up half the night to get it in on deadline and then FRIDAY is our fundraising party and I offered to help with the REFRESHMENT CONCESSION...

Don't you think you're maybe OVERCOMPENSATING just a tiny bit?

= sigh = YES! But do I have a CHOICE?



MORE LATER...

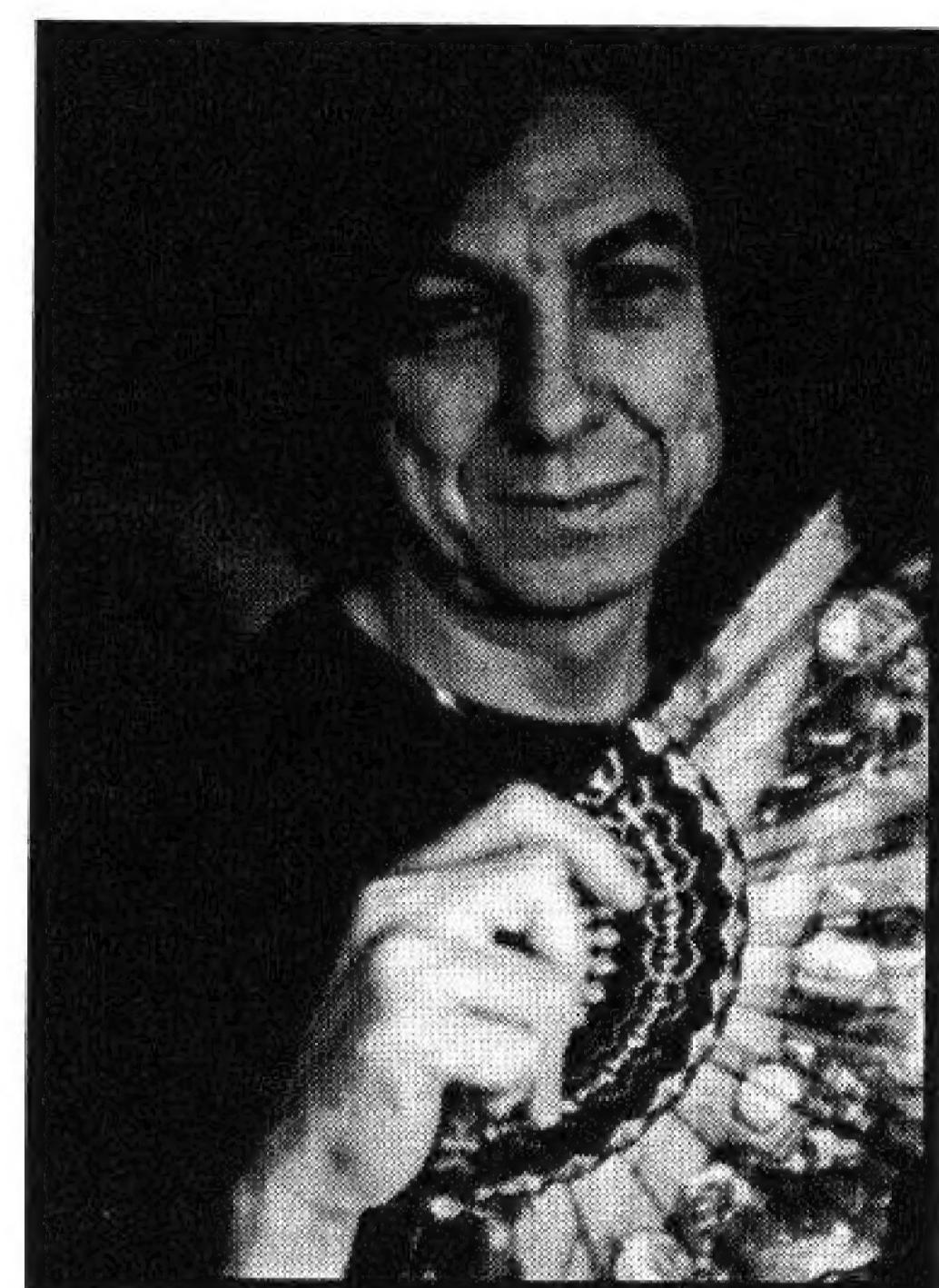
©1993 Roberta Gregory



**I want it.**



**Is it nasty?**



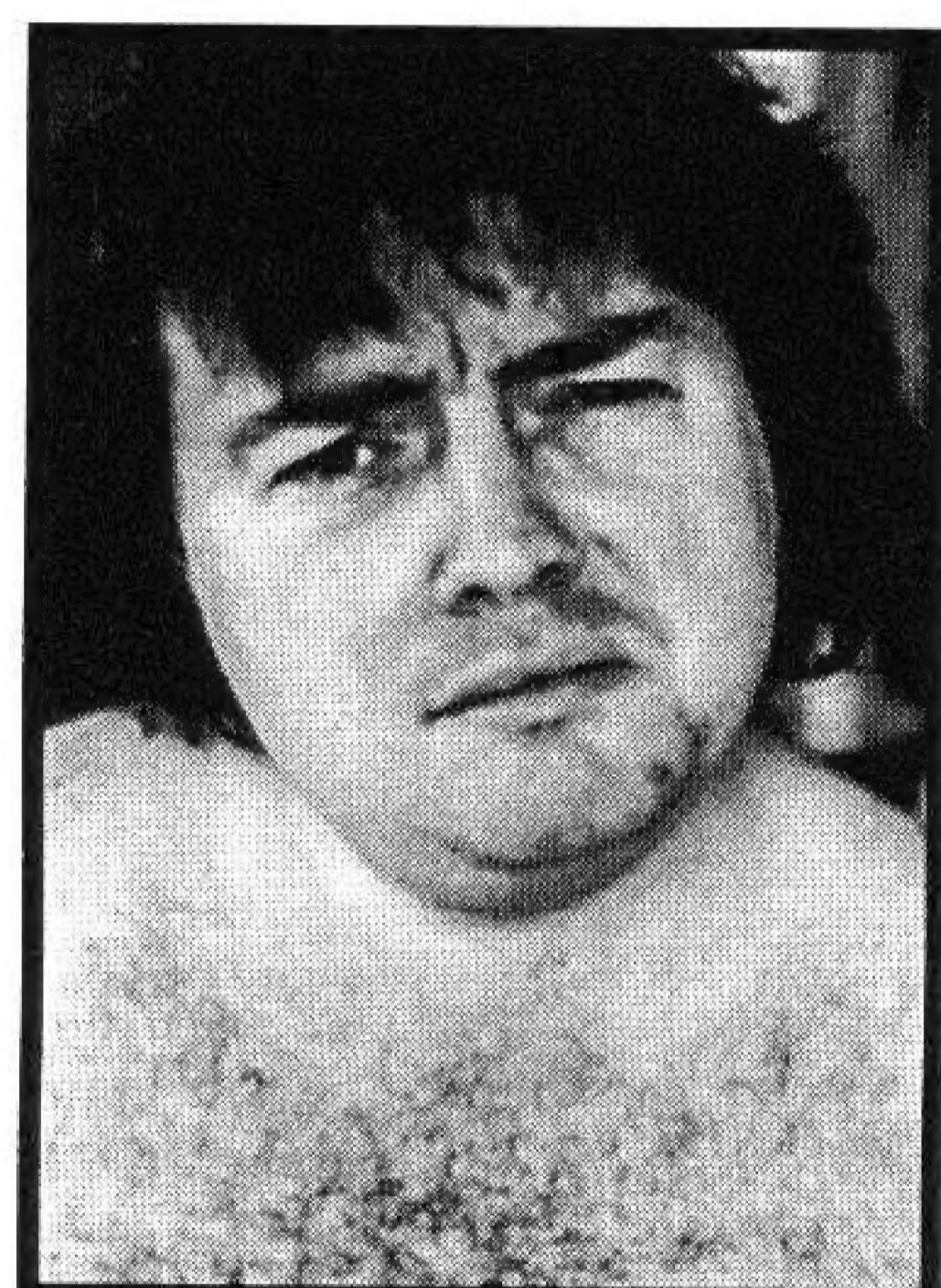
**Of course not.**



**It's good for you.**



**Do I dare?**



**What is it?**

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